TUESDAY
April 16, 2024

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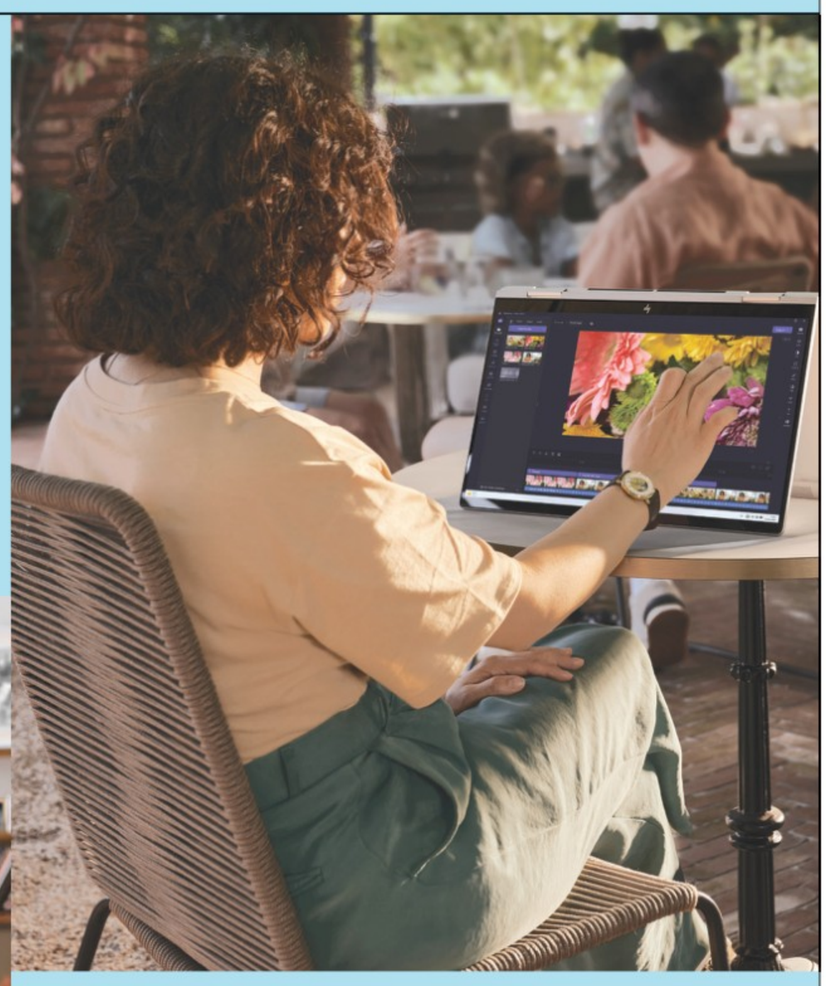

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Another intense battle awaits BJP and Congress

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Records tumble as SRH overpowers RCB

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NEARBY

HDK apologises for his comment

BENGALURU
Insisting that he had not insulted women with his remark on guarantees, former CM H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday, however, tendered an apology "if his statements have hurt their feelings." » PAGE 4

Poll debutant takes on warhorse

BENGALURU
Bengaluru Rural constituency, a bastion of Congress as incumbent MP D.K. Suresh had achieved a hat-trick here, has now attracted attention as noted cardiologist C.N. Manjunath is making his political debut by taking on the powerful 'D.K. brothers.'
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Indian officials can 'soon' meet detained crew: Iran

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar says he told the Foreign Ministers of both Iran and Israel to de-escalate tensions, as New Delhi takes a more neutral position on Iranian strikes

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Iran said that it would "soon" allow Indian officials to meet with the 17 Indian crew members detained after its forces seized an Israel-linked ship, *MSC Aries*, as the issue was raised by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar who spoke to the Foreign Ministers of both Iran and Israel late on Sunday night.

"We have been telling both of them [Israel and Iran] that please do not allow [the situation] to escalate," Mr. Jaishankar told presspersons during a visit to Bengaluru on Monday.

"This is a very crucial region for global economy. Almost 90 lakh Indian citizens are living in [the Gulf region]. A large part of our shipping passes through this part and our oil comes from this part of the world. This is enormously sensitive region and we are very concerned when there is this kind of escalation in hostilities," he added.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during a press meet at the BJP office in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

In a readout of the conversation between Mr. Jaishankar and Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian released on Monday, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said they had discussed Iran's drone and missile attack on Israel in what it called a response to Israel's attack on an Iranian embassy on April 1 in which seven Iranian diplomats and commanders died, as well as the situation in Gaza and the Red Sea.

'Shared concerns'

Mr. Jaishankar said he had also shared India's "concern at the developments", indicating Iran's drone and missile attacks, with Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz. "Discussed the larger regional situation. Agreed to stay in touch," he posted on X.

His post mirrored the statement by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Sunday that did not directly refer to Iran's strikes on Israel, suggesting a more neutral approach by New Delhi given India's strong strategic ties with both countries.

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India to get above-normal monsoon rainfall: IMD

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

While several States reel under heatwaves, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a bountiful monsoon for the year. In a press briefing on Monday, the agency forecast that the rainfall in June-September will be 6% more than the annual average of 87 cm during these months.

Last year, El Nino – a warming of the Central Pacific and usually linked to diminished rainfall in India – dented India's monsoon by 6%. This year, the El Nino has not yet fully faded but is expected to do so by June and progress to La Nina, a converse cooling effect that is usually linked to surplus rainfall by the second half of the monsoon (August and September), said IMD Director-General Mrutunjay Mahapatra.

The IMD uses multiple approaches to forecast the monsoon. One is to use statistical associations and draw upon its vast historical database of over 150 years to correlate certain global meteorological parameters such as ocean temperatures and snow cover in Europe, to the performance of the monsoon. The other way is to use the dynamical approach, or simulating the weather across the globe on a particular day, and having powerful computers crunch the numbers to extrapolate this weather into any future day or time period desired. Both these models indicated a similar outlook for the monsoon this year, said M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences.

The IMD is expected to update its monsoon forecast in May, just ahead of the monsoon onset in June, and give more information on spatial distribution.

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Rain check

The long period average (LPA) of the southwest monsoon rainfall (June to September) from 1971 to 2020 is 87 cm

- This year, the IMD has predicted that the rainfall will be 106% of the LPA
- Rainfall over the country as a whole during June-September 2023 was 82 cm (94% of LPA)
- During June-September 2022, the rainfall was 93 cm (106% of LPA)

SOURCE: IMD

EC pegs pre-poll seizure at ₹4,650 cr.

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Monday said it was on track to seize the largest amount of inducements, including drugs and cash, during an election in the past 75 years. Even before the start of polling for the Lok Sabha election, it has seized ₹4,650 crore, an amount higher than that recovered in the 2019 election. Back then, the corresponding figure had been ₹3,475 crore.

The commission said in a statement that the ₹4,650 crore seized included drugs estimated at ₹2,069 crore, over ₹395 crore in cash and liquor estimated at more than ₹489 crore. Since March 1, the poll body has been seizing goods valued at ₹100 crore every day.

Approximately, 75% of the total seizures in January and February were of drugs.

"The seizures have been possible by comprehensive planning, scaled-up collaboration and unified deterrence action from agencies, proactive citizen participation and optimal engagement of technology," the statement said.

The EC said that the use of black money and excessive political financing could disturb the level playing field in favour of the more resourceful party or candidate.

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Water break

Beat the heat: Shakti, Mumbai Zoo's royal Bengal tiger, catches a break from the relentless heat by taking a dip in the water tank inside the tiger enclosure. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Goods exports hit $41.68 bn in March

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's goods exports hit a 12-month high of $41.68 billion in March, though it constituted a 0.67% decline from the corresponding month's tally last year, while imports dropped 6% to $57.3 billion last month.

The goods trade deficit contracted to $15.6 billion in March, the lowest in 11 months, with officials attributing sliding trade gaps to conscious efforts by the government to spur import substitution and restrict inessential imports.

The import bill reduction in March was led by gold imports, which fell a sharp 53.6% to $1.53 billion, and aided by a drop in non-oil, non-gold imports.

India's goods exports in the first 10 months of 2023-24 averaged $35.4 billion.

However, silver imports jumped nearly 1,059% to $816.6 million. March's relatively strong export tally, coming on the back of a $41.4 billion figure in February, lifted the generally weak merchandise shipments tally for 2023-24.

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Wholesale price inflation accelerates to 3-month high

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's wholesale price inflation quickened to a three-month high of 0.53% in March, from 0.2% in February, with the food index rising 4.65%, led by cereal prices surging at a 12-month-high pace even as the inflation in paddy (11.7%), potato (53%) and onions (57%) accelerated.

Fuel and power as well as manufactured products continued to be in deflation mode, though the pace of price declines in both categories narrowed to about -0.8% in March.

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Modi visiting T.N. to make up for loss in North: Stalin

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had been visiting the southern States, particularly Tamil Nadu, to make up for the loss awaiting them in the northern States that used to be their stronghold.

"The BJP government led by Mr. Modi is facing stiff opposition in the northern States that used to be its source of strength. That is why Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah seek to make up for it in the southern States. In the southern States, particularly Tamil Nadu, the ideology of the BJP is against the mindset of the people," he told *The Hindu*.

M.K. Stalin at a public meeting at Manjampakkam near Chennai, while campaigning for INDIA bloc candidates. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

He said the purpose of this election was to decide who should not come to power rather than who should come to power. "Mr. Modi was in the fray with the mask of 'Gujarat model' and 'hero of development'. The mask has slipped and today he has been exposed as 'corrupt Modi'. People are angry because he has damaged the entire country for his selfish politics."

He also asserted that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's one visit to the State is equivalent to 10 visits of Mr. Modi. "It is like the saying, *Oru thadavai sonna nooru thadavai sonna maadhiri* [saying it once is equivalent to saying it a 100 times]," he said, recalling the punchline from Rajinikanth's film *Baasha*.

Noting that prime ministerial candidates were not projected in all elections in the history of Indian elections, Mr. Stalin said the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004 secured victory without projecting a prime ministerial candidate and Manmohan Singh became the Prime Minister of the country.

"It is history that he ruled the country for 10 years. The history created in 2004 will be repeated after 20 years now," he said.

Asked whether the BJP would be able to increase its vote share in Tamil Nadu in the Lok Sabha election, the Chief Minister said there was an attempt with the help of the media to construct a myth that the BJP was growing. "But the BJP can never take root in Tamil Nadu. The party does not have the intention to genuinely poll even 100 votes through good schemes for Tamil Nadu. Since it is in power, it receives the attention of the media. That's all," he said.

Mr. Stalin rejected the perception that the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) may gain some traction in the election since it had snapped ties with the BJP and that its leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami had proved wrong the allegation that he and his party were slaves to the BJP. "The separate front led by the AIADMK is a one-act play that is being enacted with the blessings of the BJP's leadership. He is not just a slave, he is a bonded labourer to the BJP. He is not ready to open his mouth against the BJP even after snapping ties with the party. It is more atrocious than his behaviour when he was part of the BJP alliance," Mr. Stalin said.

He also did not agree with the argument that only a multi-cornered contest was working in favour of the DMK, saying that elections should only be judged based on the trend on the ground. "Has the rival camp discovered the reasons for their defeat even before the results are declared? Were these parties not part of the same front in the 2019 Lok Sabha election and 2021 Assembly election? Still they were defeated," he pointed out.

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One killed, 2 hurt as scooter falls into pit dug up by BWSSB

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 20-year-old was killed and two others injured when the bike they were riding fell into a pit over 20 feet deep dug up by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) on SMV Road near Kommaghatta Club, Kengeri, on Sunday night.

The deceased has been identified as Saddam Hussain, 20. The injured are Umraz Pasha, 25, and Mubarak Pasha, also in his twenties.

They have sustained multiple injuries and have been admitted to a private hospital.

They were returning home after visiting friends when the accident occurred.

Cauvery Stage V pipeline work

The BWSSB had begun work to lay a water pipeline under the Cauvery Stage V project.

It had also put up two barricades around the pit, which is more than 20 feet deep. While one barricade was erected a few yards away from the pit to warn motorists, another was erected right next to the pit's perimeter.

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AFP

Bayer is no longer 'Neverkusen'

The Bundesliga club undergoes an incredible transformation under Xabi Alonso and clinches its first league title

Saikat Chakraborty

Scenes of pure jubilation erupted at the BayArena on Sunday as Bayer Leverkusen emphatically secured its first-ever Bundesliga title. A dominant 5-0 victory against Werder Bremen sealed the historic feat with five games to spare.

This remarkable triumph dethroned the mighty Bayern Munich, which held a vice-like grip on the league for eleven consecutive seasons. This fairytale ending comes just over a year after the club found itself precariously perched at the bottom of the table.

But under the astute guidance of Xabi Alonso, who is in his first full season managing a club's first team, Leverkusen has undergone a staggering metamorphosis, transforming from relegation candidates into invincible champions. The treble, with the Europa League and DFB Pokal trophies still within reach, beckons as a testament to this extraordinary journey.

A style rooted in balance

"We want to play modern football. That means: intensity with and without the ball, being more active than passive and with a strong mentality," Alonso told *Diario AS* about his approach.

Playing 3-4-2-1, Alonso's Leverkusen is a well-drilled modern football team that likes to dominate possession and use counter-pressing to win the ball back when out of possession. Despite being an inexperienced coach at the top level, the Spaniard has played under some of the most influential managers of the modern era during his storied playing career.

From Rafa Benitez at Liverpool to Jose Mourinho and Carlo Ancelotti at Real Madrid to Pep Guardiola at Bayern Munich and even his Spanish national team boss Vicente del Bosque, Alonso learned from the very best. He has taken all their philosophies on board and created his own unique style.

Without the ball, Leverkusen defends in a 5-2-2-1, the defensive block is narrow and compact which makes it difficult to play through. However, the *Werkself* is not a placid low-block team instead it tries to force turnovers through its defensive block.

This system provides both offensive dynamism and defensive stability, allowing Leverkusen to adapt to different game situations. The summer acquisitions of Granit Xhaka (€25m), Victor Boniface (€20m), Jonas Hofmann (€10m) and Alex Grimaldo (free) have enabled Alonso to assert his philosophy on the pitch.

Alonso emphasises on ball possession. Leverkusen boasts the second-highest average possession (59%) in the Bundesliga, seeking to control the rhythm of the game through patient passing (most average 10+ passes of 634 per match) and intricate build-up play (most passes per sequence of 5.02). Its short, snappy passes create triangles and overloads, breaking down defences and opening up scoring opportunities.

The back three offer solidity and the wing-backs provide crucial width in attack as well as cover in defence. The central midfield duo acts as a bridge, controlling the tempo and orchestrating attacks. Up front, a mobile forward line prioritises movement and combination play.

The two attacking midfielders and the strikers play a fluid front three and how they function varies from opponent to opponent. Against the back three, the 10s push high to engage with the opposition centre-backs while against the back fours, the striker drops deep to pick up the opposition number 6 whilst the 10s press the centre-backs.

The wing-backs play a pivotal role in Leverkusen's attacking strategy. They bomb forward, stretching the opposition's defence and creating space for overlapping runs from midfield. Alonso also encourages full-back inversions, where one tucks into midfield while the other pushes high to create numerical advantages.

Despite its attacking intent, Leverkusen maintains a solid defensive structure and has conceded the least goals (19) in the league. The back three is well-drilled, utilizing zonal marking and aggressive pressing to win the ball back high up the pitch. This system provides both offensive dynamism and defensive stability, allowing Leverkusen to adapt to different game situations.

Despite being filled with developing youngsters like Victor Boniface, Florian Wirtz, Jeremie Frimpong, Exequiel Palacios, Piero Hincapie and Edmond Tapsoba, Alonso has managed to steer the team to Bundesliga glory and it is not finished yet.

In the 2001-02 season, Leverkusen was on course to win a treble but was pipped by Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga on the final day, lost the final of DFB-Pokal (German Cup) to Schalke and was beaten by Real Madrid in the Champions League final. This prompted the English media to dub the club as 'Neverkusen' – the club that never wins.

Founded in 1904 by employees of the German pharmaceutical company Bayer AG, the club has finished as runner-up in the Bundesliga five times without winning the competition, a record in German football. Previously, the club had won only two major trophies in its history; one UEFA Cup (modern-day Europa League) in 1987-88 and one DFB-Pokal in 1992-93.

However, under the tutelage of Alonso, Leverkusen shook off its infamous moniker. It won the Bundesliga, booked itself a place in the final of DFB-Pokal and qualified for the quarterfinal in the Europa League while remaining the only unbeaten team in Europe's top five leagues.

This season, Leverkusen has become synonymous with late dramas, scoring 23 after the 81st minute across all competitions. In the Bundesliga alone, these late strikes have secured it an additional seven points.

It has scored four goals after the 91st minute in the league, without those crucial strikes, it would have been seven points less and Bayern Munich two points more, meaning Leverkusen would only be seven ahead of the defending champion.

Following its dramatic late win over Hoffenheim, Granit Xhaka perfectly captured the team's new spirit: "It's not a surprise anymore. We've scored so many late goals this season, we just keep fighting until the final whistle."

This newfound mentality has propelled Leverkusen to history. It also became the first German team to go unbeaten for 29 league games.

Adapting to win

Alonso's tactical genius shone throughout the campaign with his masterful utilisation of the squad. The Spaniard's fluid systems are designed to adapt to opposing threats, countering them with strategic ingenuity. His deployment of diverse player profiles in various positions to influence the game's outcome underlines his credentials as a potent tactician.

During a crucial Bundesliga clash against Bayern Munich on February 10, the World Cup winner surprised many with his selections. He benched attacking wing-back Frimpong, opting for traditional full-back Josip Stanisic instead. Winger Amine Adli led the attack, displacing established strikers Borja Iglesias and Patrik Schick, with Boniface out of the picture.

Leverkusen's setup was also adapted; instead of dominating possession and pressing high, it ceded control to Bayern, sitting deeper. Alonso seemed confident that his fluid structure, combined with direct attacks could exploit Bayern's defensive fragilities.

These changes initially appeared unconventional, but Alonso's plan proved successful. His team thrashed the Bavarian giants 3-0, taking a significant five-point lead in the title race.

Alonso has also demonstrated considerable faith in his squad by actively using substitutions throughout the season. Leverkusen averages 4.12 substitutions per game in the league. Of the 29 players registered, 24 have made at least one league appearance, with 19 playing more than 200 minutes.

In all competitions, Leverkusen boasts the second-highest number of goal contributions from substitutes in Europe (32 from 167 subs) - behind only Liverpool's 47 from 207.

Leverkusen's title victory isn't merely a changing of the guard; it's a reawakening. For over a decade, Bayern's dominance cast a long shadow. Now, with the *Meisterschale* on the other side of the Rhine, the Bundesliga has a new dawn. Leverkusen's triumph reignites the passion of fans and the promise of a competitive league, where unpredictability replaces predictability, and excitement burns brighter than ever.

THE GIST

- Leverkusen has not lost in 43 matches in all competitions in 2023-24 so far
- It holds the Bundesliga record for most matches unbeaten (29) in a single season
- Leverkusen's maiden Bundesliga title came with five games remaining. It will play its last league match on May 18
- The team is five contests away from a treble (Europa League, Bundesliga and DFB Pokal) and a game away from clinching a domestic double

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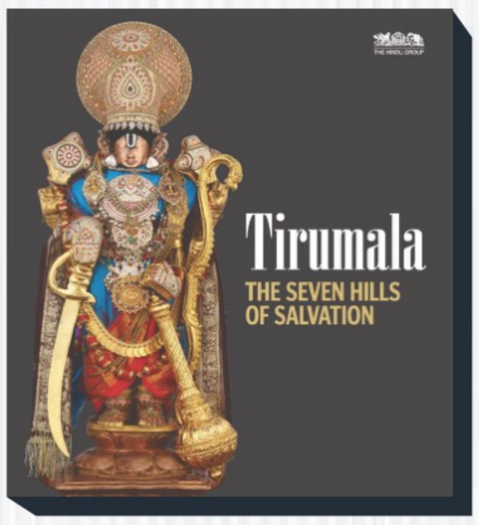

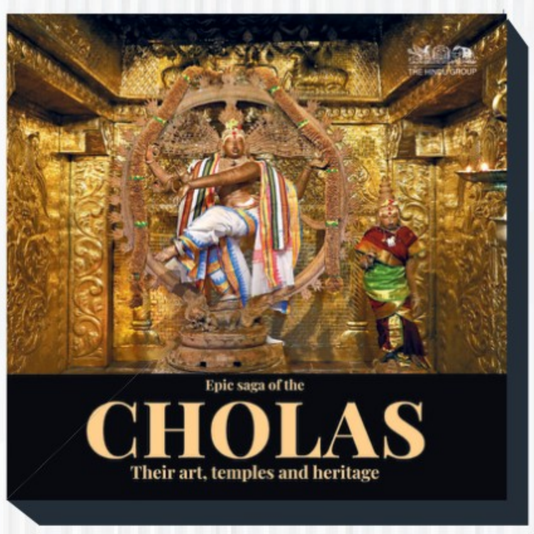

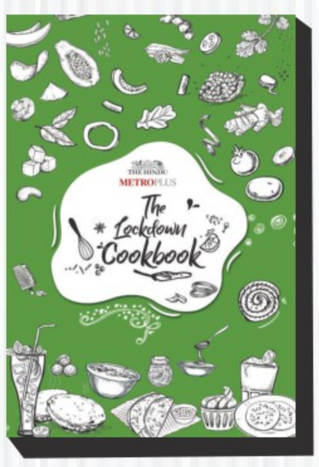

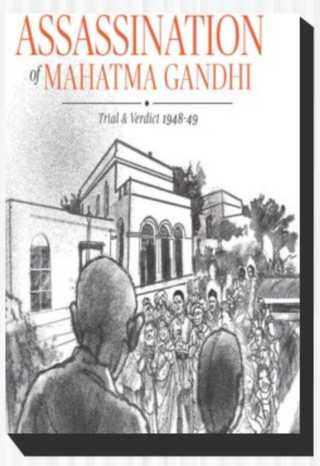

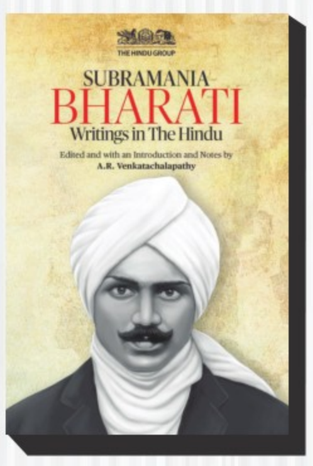

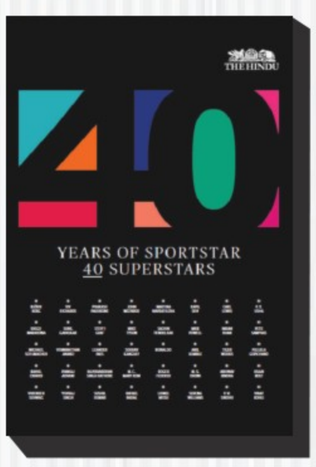

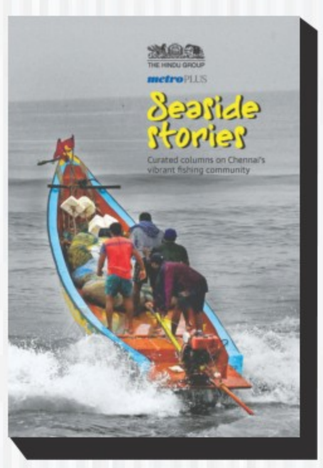

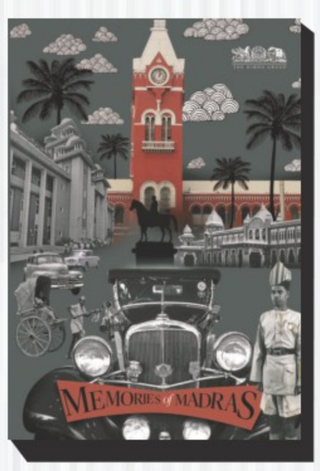

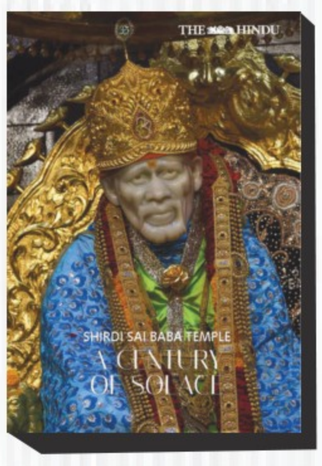

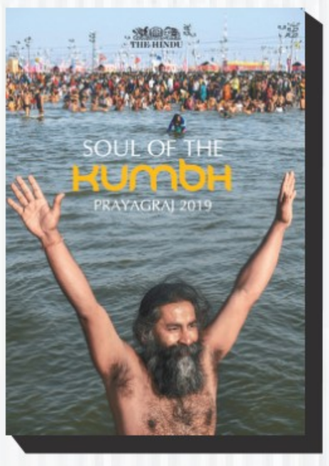

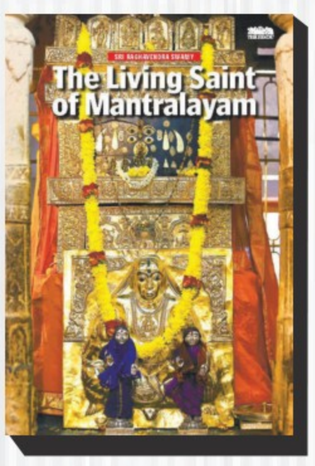

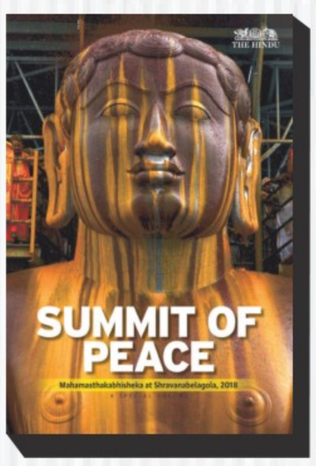

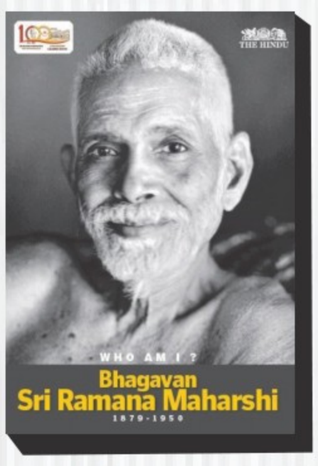

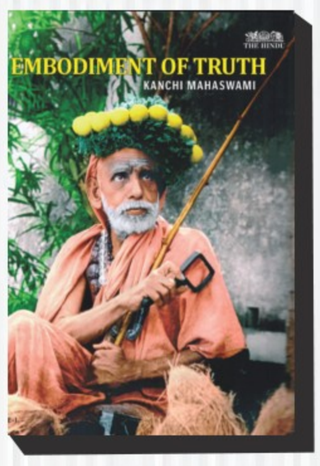

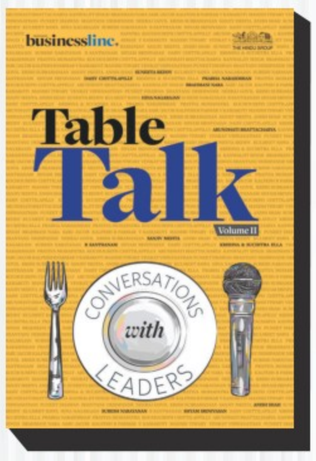

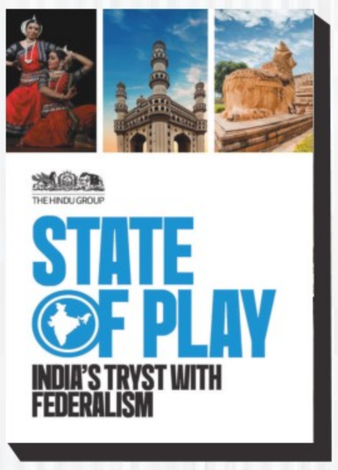

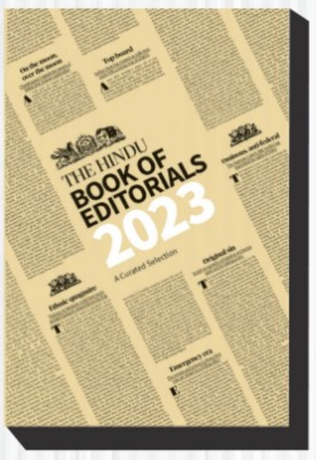

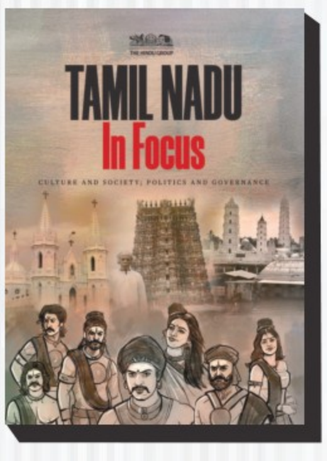

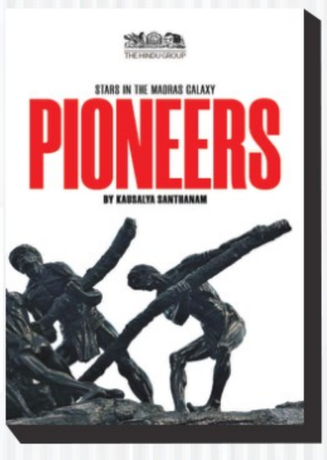

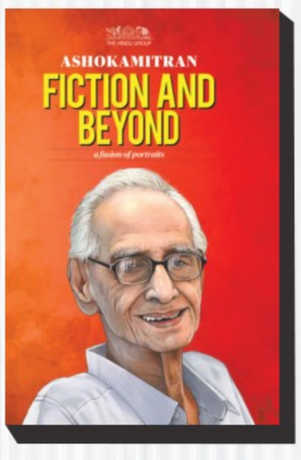

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BMRDA recommends reducing width of IRR from 90m to 60m

It was made keeping in view the commercial activities that happened on either side of the road in a few towns where alignment of Intermediary Ring Road was merged with major roads, highways

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Of the 216.39 km-long Intermediary Ring Road, about 150 km will run through State and national highways and another 50 km through major district roads. FILE PHOTO

The Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) has recommended reducing the width of the 216.39 km Intermediary Ring Road (IRR) from 90 metres to 60 metres. The recommendation was made at a meeting in February.

The recommendation was made keeping in view the commercial and development activities that happened on either side of the road in a few towns where alignment of the IRR was merged with major district roads and State highways.

Of the 216.39 km long IRR, about 150 km will run through State and national highways, and another 50 km will run through major district roads. Currently, the width of these stretches are between nine and 30 metres and it would be difficult to widen the road up to 90 metres, minutes of the BMRDA board meeting noted.

In 2023, the BMRDA issued notification merging the alignment of the IRR with major district roads, State and national highways. The IRR alignment has been merged with six major district roads, three national highway stretches, and 24 State highway stretches.

According to a senior official in the Urban Development Department (UDD) who attended the meeting, the recommendation holds significance as most of the areas are developed. The official said it would difficult to acquire huge amounts of developed land as it would burden the exchequer.

Rakesh Singh, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), UDD, talking to *The Hindu*, said in the meeting it was also proposed to merge the alignment of the IRR with the proposed Intermediary Town Ring Road (ITRR) in Whitefield area.

In this connection, the Public Works Department has been directed to conduct a survey in this area and submit a report on the same, Mr. Singh said.

Joshi, Shettar, Geetha, and Bommai file nominations

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi at a roadshow before filing his nomination papers in Dharwad on Monday.

Several top leaders on Monday filed their nomination papers for elections to 14 constituencies in Karnataka. They include Geetha Shivarajkumar (Congress) from Shivamogga, Mrinal Hebbalakar (Congress) and Jagadish Shettar (BJP) from Belagavi, Pralhad Joshi (BJP) from Dharwad, and Basavaraj Bommai (BJP) from Haveri, who went in grand processions to file their papers.

Ms. Geetha, who filed her nomination papers at Shivamogga, declared that she possesses properties and valuables worth ₹40.04 crore. Her husband and cine actor Shivarajkumar owns properties worth over ₹49 crore. Ms. Geetha had earlier contested as JD(S) candidate for the Shivamogga seat in 2014. Then, she declared that she owned assets worth ₹6.17 crore. Her husband then possessed assets worth over ₹11.5 crore.

Interestingly, at Belagavi, the assets of Congress candidate Mrinal Hebbalkar (son of Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar) and his political opponent Jagadish Shettar are nearly equal. The total asset value of Mr. Hebbalkar is around ₹13.6 crore and that of Mr. Shettar is around ₹13.8 crore. Dr. Hita Mrinal has total assets of around ₹23 lakh. Mr. Shettar's wife Shilpa has total assets of ₹91 lakh.

Mr. Joshi and his family have declared assets worth ₹21 crore and he and his wife together have liabilities worth ₹8.01 crore. While Mr. Joshi has declared movable assets worth ₹2.72 crore in his name, his wife Jyoti has movable assets worth ₹5.93 crore. He has immovable assets worth ₹11.24 crore in his name and ₹86.39 lakh in his wife's name.

Mr. Bommai has declared assets worth ₹53.95 crore. As per the affidavit, Mr. Bommai has movable assets ₹6.12 crore and his wife Channamma has movable assets of ₹1.32 crore. In addition, he has movable assets worth ₹1.49 crore from HUF.

BEL signs MoU with IIT-Mandi

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) signed an MoU with the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi, for co-operation in research and technology, product development, in the areas of semiconductors, quantum technologies, and drones.

BEL said that the MoU aims at leveraging the complementary strengths and capabilities of BEL and IIT-Mandi.

"It will support indigenisation of products/solutions being supplied by BEL to its customers and is in line with the Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative," BEL said.

BEL engaged inter alia in design, development and manufacture of professional-grade electronic equipment, systems, subsystems and modules in the areas of communications, electro-optics, electronic warfare, radars, satcom, telecommunications and networking, solar photovoltaic, strategic electronic components and civilian. The PSU has has achieved a turnover of around ₹19,700 crore, during the financial year 2023-24, against the previous year's turnover of ₹17,333 crore registering a growth of 13.65%.

City witnesses surge in sale of ACs

BEAT THE HEAT

Tenzin Yangkey
Nikita Maria Jino
BENGALURU

As Bengaluru continues to see high temperatures, the demand for cooling devices is expected to persist, marking a significant departure from past consumption patterns. SUDHAKARA JAIN

In Bengaluru, traditionally a city with a limited demand window for cooling devices, a significant shift in consumer behaviour has been observed this summer. Dealers across the city have reported a remarkable increase in inquiries and sales compared to previous years.

Satyamurthy, owner of Ind Air Con Engineers in Wilson Garden, revealed a staggering 35% surge in inquiries since March alone. This spike defies the conventional trend of peak sales occurring before the onset of the monsoon in late May, he said.

"Bengaluru typically experiences a demand cycle of three to four months for cooling devices, but this year we have seen a substantial uptick in interest," he remarked.

The trend is mirrored in consumer actions, with many residents opting to install additional air conditioners or coolers in their homes. Anuradha, a resident of the city, installed two more air conditioners to her four-bedroom flat owing to the intense weather conditions. "ACs provide immediate relief unlike other alternatives," she emphasised.

Razi Ahamed, Director of Sales at Premium Cooling and Interior Solutions in Jayanagar, corroborated the trend, noting a surge in both residential and commercial customers. Interestingly, a significant portion of these customers were first-time buyers.

Beyond sheer necessity, consumers are also prioritising advanced features in their purchases. Syed Ahmed, a brand dealer at Samsung Opera House in Brigade Road, highlighted the demand for features like built-in WiFi for remote control and energy-saving options. This demand for cutting-edge technology has led to a notable increase in sales across stores. Mr. Ahmed further attributed the escalating demand to the effects of global warming, underscoring the urgency of the situation.

As Bengaluru continues to see high temperatures, the demand for cooling devices is expected to persist, marking a significant departure from past consumption patterns.

Two hurt in mobile phone snatching case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 27-year-old biker and pillion rider fell from the motorcycle and sustained injuries after two men snatched their mobile phone near Hosmat hospital on Ballari road on Sunday.

Arindam Ghosh, a private firm employee, had gone trekking to Betta Halasuru from Koramangala with three of his friends and was returning home at around 4 a.m. Pillion rider Sohini Ghosh was navigating Google map on her iPhone, when the men snatched it and sped away. The duo lost control and crashed into the road median and sustained injuries. Sadashivnagar police have registered a case.

Man dies after falling from railway bridge

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An unidentified man was killed after he fell from the railway bridge in Chandapura on Bengaluru Hosur highway on Monday.

Passersby noticed the man crash on the road and alerted the police. The Surya City police rushed to the spot and shifted him to a hospital where he was declared as brought dead.

The Byappanahalli railway police suspect that the deceased, aged around 30, was hit by a train while walking on the bridge. It was not clear whether it was case of suicide or an accident, the police said.

The police are trying to ascertain the identity of the deceased. A case of unnatural death has been taken up.

Autorickshaw driver killed in road accident

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 32-year-old man was killed and his friend injured when a speeding water tanker knocked them down on Magadi Main Road on Monday.

The deceased Harish R. an autorickshaw driver, and his friend Suchith, 28, had gone out on their motorcycle and was returning home late in the night. They were not wearing helmets.

Hit-and run

While passing on Tunga Nagar Main Road, a water tanker coming from opposite direction hit their bike. While Suchith, who was riding, fell on the other side, Harish slipped under the front wheels of the truck and sustained severe injuries. The truck driver sped away.

Passersby rushed the injured to Victoria hospital where Harish was declared as brought dead. The Kamakshipalya Traffic police registered a case of hit-and-run and tracked down the truck while the driver is still at large. The police are awaiting the post-mortem report for further investigations.

In booths with low turnout, govt. to paste vote pledge sticker on doors of houses

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The voter sticker has the polling date printed prominently and a pledge. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Booth-level officials will carry out door-to-door campaigning pasting stickers on doors of houses informing them of April 26 being the voting day in booths that saw low voter turnout in the previous election.

Holding a videoconference with officials, District Election Officer Tushar Giri Nath directed officials to make all efforts to boost voter turnout in the city this time.

He also instructed officials to distribute voters' slips and guide in a speedy manner and deploy supervisors to oversee door-to-door awareness campaigns. The voter sticker has the polling date printed prominently and a pledge that says they will vote for sure.

District Election Officer Tushar Giri Nath directed officials to make all efforts to boost voter turnout in the city this time

Meanwhile, Special Commissioner (Election Division) Selvamani said the second stage of training for polling booth officials will be held on Wednesday.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated April 16, we have a story on the Early Bird initiative that has recently curated Prakrutiya Pettige, a nature education kit in Kannada, which aims to introduce young people to the wonder of birds.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our client **MR.BIJOY KALATHIL S/o. Mr.Balakrishnan Kalathil** is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **LAVANYA M D/o. Muni Byregowda;** any person/s, company, Bank, Financial Institutions objecting for the proposed purchase or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof on or before **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our clients shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Residential Apartment/Flat **No.GF-007**, in the Ground Floor, with super built-up area 806 Square Feet, BBMP Katha No.229/30/1-6-GF-007, in the Apartment building known as **"TRIGUNA PALM GROVE"** converted land bearing Survey No.30/1, Katha No.229/30/1, issued by Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, vide Office Memorandum Order No. ALN(NAY)SR/104-15-16, Dated:05.04.2016, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore, Situated at : **Agrahara Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore,** Presently Yelahanka Taluk along with **398 Sq. feet** of Undivided right, title and interest in the total land.

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
Mr. VENKATESH CHANDRAN M.A., L.L.B.
Advocates & Legal Consultants Bangalore-43
M: 9845846428, 9108784843, 080-48658774

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2C

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work.

E-Tender Notice No: Y/E.29/2024-25/03 Dated : 05.04.2024

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Krishnarajanagar - Provision of additional running line on Mysuru - Hassan line.	Rs. 1,20,36,717.11

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs on 29-04-2024**

E-Tender Notice No: Y/E.29/2024-25/04 Dated : 05.04.2024

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Provision of Retro Reflective Sigma boards on OHE support structure.	Rs. 12,35,598.55

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs on 29-04-2024**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / TR
PUB/17/AAS/PRB/SWR/2024-25 **Mysuru**
South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

Government of Karnataka
Karnataka Monitoring and Evaluation Authority
542, 5th Floor, 2nd Stage, Multistoried Building
Bangalore 560 001. Tel : 080-22353938, 22032561
E-mail : kmeagok@karnataka.gov.in,
Website : www.kmea.karnataka.gov.in

KMEA 18 PROC 2023 **10/04/2024**

NOTIFICATION-2nd Call

Karnataka Monitoring and Evaluation Authority (KMEA) is an established Society under Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960 under the Planning, Programme Monitoring and Statistics Department, Government of Karnataka. It is involved in the evaluation of various Government schemes and hereby offering useful insights to departments about programme implementation and usefulness of the schemes.

KMEA invites applications from competent and qualified persons to work as Research Fellows on contract basis for a consolidated pay of Rs.47900 per month for an initial period of one year i.e. training period, extendable up to three years based on performance and learning.

Qualification: 1. Ph.D. in Humanities (Social Work, Sociology & Economics), 2. Ph.D. in Natural Sciences/ Agriculture and Allied sector, 3. Ph.D. in Education, 4. Ph.D. in Gender studies/Public health, 5. Ph.D. in Rural Development/Law, 6. Ph.D. in Statistics, 7. Ph.D. in Applied Sciences (Civil Engineering/ Water Resources/ Hydrology or related subjects).

Desirable Qualification: Candidates with computer knowledge, typing skills, knowledge of reading and writing Kannada will be preferred.

No. of Posts: Seven (One in each sector).

The last date for application is extended to 30/04/2024.

For further details and application form visit KMEA website https://kmea.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/-
Chief Evaluation Officer
Karnataka Monitoring and Evaluation Authority.

DIPR/CP/16/MAA/2024-25

KARNATAKA STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ UNIVERSITY,
Raith Bhavan, General Cariappa Circle, GADAG - 582101, KARNATAKA
University Campus, Nagavi, Gadag-582103

Admission Notification: 2024-25

ADMISSION OPEN

Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag, invites Applications for admission to the following **Under Graduate Programmes**, as per UGC Guidelines in the University from eligible candidates.

★ Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)	-	Rural Development & Political Science
★ Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)	-	Innovation & Startups
★ Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)	-	Public Health & Social Work
★ Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)	-	Agri-business & Food Processing
★ Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)	-	Geoinformatics & Computer Science

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* Focus on Multi disciplinary Approach
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* Local Language and Indigenous Knowledge.
* Vibrant Placement Cell, Career Guidance & Competitive Exams Facilitation Centre.
* Sprawling Lush Green Environment Campus of 353 Acres with replica of Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram.
* State of the art Digital Library, Laboratories, Computer Lab, Language Lab, Sports, Gym, Yoga, Auditorium and other facilities.
* Separate Hostel facility for Boys and Girls.
* Impetus for experiential learning, cultural and extracurricular activities.
* Active NSS and Red Cross Units on Campus.

Rural Roots Global Heights

Last Date for submission of application is 15.05.2024

For More Details Contact: 9980791212
Email: ksrdpruadmissions@gmail.com
Admission Help Desk: Cell:7975202206 / 7795100729
Website: www.ksrdpru.ac.in

Prof.Dr. Suresh V.Nadagoudar
Registrar

Prof. Vishnukant S. Chatpalli
Vice Chancellor

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

96th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

D. SAROJA
16.04.1928 - 15.01.2022
Wife of late
Sri.T.K. Duraiswami,
Prathama Acharya Purusha of Tirumala, daughter of late M Singrachari and M S Pattammal of Chittoor
Fondly remembered by :
Smt.Vijaya & Sri.N.S. Mohanram
Smt.Vatsala & Sri.V A Raghu
Sri.T.K. Balaji & Smt.Sheela Balaji
Smt.Mala & Sri.S. Ramakrishnan
Grand Children & Great Grand Children

DEATH

Meenakshi Subramanian (Meena) 89 yrs
W/o Late V. Subramanian,
Ex-Teacher, Rosary Matric;
Besant School; Ashram, Chennai,
Passed away peacefully on 14-04-2024 at Atlanta, USA
Deeply mourned by
Uthra & Jagan, S. Guhan & Trupti, Samantha & Pranay

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

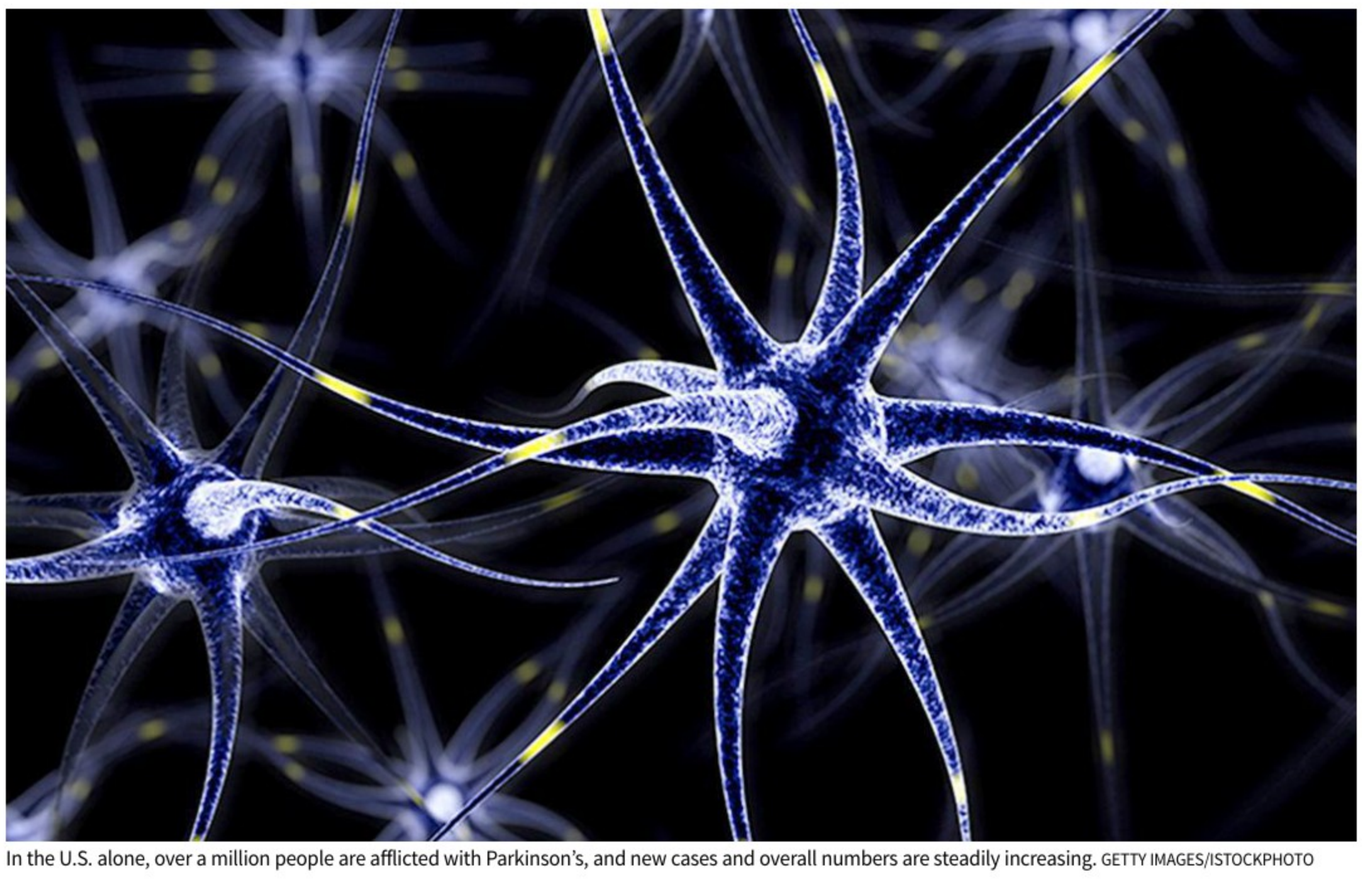
TWENTY THIRD ANNIVERSARY
ON 16-04-2024

Sri S.Janardhan
Time has gone but memories of you are still fresh in our minds
Grieved by:
Family Members
Partners and Staff of
S. JANARDHAN & ASSOCIATES
Chartered Accountants

Gene variant tied to Parkinson's may also show a way to beat it

What makes each person genetically susceptible to nonfamilial Parkinson's disease is different. Using genetic data it is posible to test for types of dysfunction in the cell that are hallmarks of the disease. This will help identify environmental factors that influence the risk of developing it

Matthew Farrer



In the U.S. alone, over a million people are afflicted with Parkinson's, and new cases and overall numbers are steadily increasing. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative movement disorder that progresses relentlessly. It gradually impairs a person's ability to function until they ultimately become immobile and often develop dementia. In the U.S. alone, over a million people are afflicted with Parkinson's, and new cases and overall numbers are steadily increasing.

There is currently no treatment to slow or halt Parkinson's disease. Available drugs don't slow disease progression and can treat only certain symptoms. Medications that work early in the disease, however, such as Levodopa, generally become ineffective over the years, necessitating increased doses that can lead to disabling side effects. Without understanding the fundamental molecular cause of Parkinson's, it's improbable that researchers will be able to develop a medication to stop the disease from steadily worsening in patients.

Many factors may contribute to the development of Parkinson's, both environmental and genetic. Until recently, underlying genetic causes of the disease were unknown. Most cases of Parkinson's aren't inherited but sporadic, and early studies suggested a genetic basis was improbable.

Nevertheless, everything in biology has a genetic foundation. As a geneticist and molecular neuroscientist, I have devoted my career to predicting and preventing Parkinson's disease. In our newly published research, my team and I discovered a new genetic variant linked to Parkinson's that sheds light on the evolutionary origin of multiple forms of familial parkinsonism, opening doors to better understand and treat the disease.

Genetic linkages and associations

In the mid-1990s, researchers started looking into whether genetic differences between people with or without Parkinson's might identify specific genes or genetic variants that cause the disease. In general, I and other geneticists use two approaches to map the genetic blueprint of Parkinson's: linkage analysis and association studies.

Linkage analysis focuses on rare families where parkinsonism, or neurological conditions with similar symptoms to Parkinson's, is passed down. This technique looks for cases where a disease-causing version of the gene and Parkinson's appear to be passed down in the same person. It requires information on your family tree, clinical data and DNA samples. Relatively few families, such as those with more than two living, affected relatives willing to participate, are needed to expedite new genetic discoveries.

"Linkage" between a pathogenic genetic variant and disease development is so significant that it can inform a diagnosis. It has also become the basis of many lab models used to study the consequences of gene dysfunction and how to fix it. Linkage studies, like the one my team and I published, have identified pathogenic mutations in over 20 genes. Notably, many patients in families with parkinsonism have symptoms that are indistinguishable from typical, late-onset Parkinson's. Nevertheless, what causes inherited Parkinsonism, which typically affects people with earlier-onset disease, may not be the cause of Parkinson's in the general population.

Conversely, genome-wide association studies, or GWAS, compare genetic data from patients with Parkinson's with unrelated people of the same age, gender and ethnicity who don't have the disease. Typically, this involves assessing how frequently in both groups over 2 million common gene variants appear. Because these studies require analysing so many gene variants, researchers need to gather clinical data and DNA samples from over 100,000 people.

Although costly and time-consuming, the findings of genome-wide association studies are widely applicable. Combining the data of these studies has identified many locations in the genome that contribute to the risk of developing Parkinson's. Currently, there are over 92 locations in the genome that contain about 350 genes potentially involved in the disease. However, GWAS locations can be considered only in aggregate; individual results are not helpful in diagnosis nor in disease modeling, as the contribution of these individual genes to disease risk is so minimal.

Together, "linked" and "associated" discoveries imply a number of molecular pathways are involved in Parkinson's. Each identified gene and the proteins they encode typically can have more than one effect. The functions of each gene and protein may also vary by cell type. The question is which gene variants, functions and pathways are most relevant to Parkinson's? How do researchers meaningfully connect this data?

Parkinson's disease genes

Using linkage analysis, my team and I identified a new genetic mutation for Parkinson's disease called RAB32 Ser71Arg. This mutation was linked to Parkinsonism in three families and found in 13 other people in several countries, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Turkey, Tunisia, the U.S. and the U.K.

> Linkage between a pathogenic variant and disease development is so significant that it can inform diagnosis. It has also become the basis of many lab models used to study the consequences of gene dysfunction

Although the affected individuals and families originate from many parts of the world, they share an identical fragment of chromosome 6 that contains RAB32 Ser71Arg. This suggests these patients are all related to the same person; ancestrally, they are distant cousins. It also suggests there are many more cousins to identify.

With further analysis, we found RAB32 Ser71Arg interacts with several proteins previously linked to early- and late-onset Parkinsonism as well as nonfamilial Parkinson's disease. The RAB32 Ser71Arg variant also causes similar dysfunction within cells.

Together, the proteins encoded by these linked genes optimize levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine is lost in Parkinson's as the cells that produce it progressively die. Together, these linked genes and the proteins they encode and regulate specialised autophagy processes. In addition, these encoded proteins enable immunity within cells.

Such linked genes support the idea that these causes of inherited parkinsonism evolved to improve survival in early life because they enhance immune response to pathogens. RAB32 Ser71Arg suggest how and why many mutations have originated, despite creating a susceptible genetic background for Parkinson's in later life.

RAB32 Ser71Arg is the first linked gene researchers have identified that directly connects the dots between prior linked discoveries. The proteins encoded bring together three important functions of the cell: autophagy, immunity and mitochondrial function. While autophagy releases energy stored in the cell's trash, this needs to be coordinated with another specialized component within the cell, mitochondria, that are the major supplier of energy. Mitochondria also help to control cell immunity because they evolved from bacteria the cell's immune system recognizes as "self" rather than as an invading pathogen to destroy.

Identifying subtle genetic differences

Finding the molecular blueprint for familial Parkinson's is the first step to fixing the faulty mechanisms behind the disease. Like the owner's manual to your car's engine, it provides a practical guide of what to check when the motor fails.

Just as each make of motor is subtly different, what makes each person genetically susceptible to nonfamilial Parkinson's disease is also subtly different. However, analyzing genetic data can now test for types of dysfunction in the cell that are hallmarks of Parkinson's disease. This will help researchers identify environmental factors that influence the risk of developing Parkinson's, as well as medications that may help protect against the disease.

More patients and families participating in genetic research are needed to find additional components of the engine behind Parkinson's. Each person's genome has about 27 million variants of the 6 billion building blocks that make up their genes. There are many more genetic components for Parkinson's that have yet to be found.

As our discovery illustrates, each new gene that researchers identify can profoundly improve our ability to predict and prevent Parkinson's.

(Matthew Farrer is a professor of neurology, University of Florida. This article is republished from The Conversation.*)*

A 'Coral Fort' that researchers are using to protect laboratory-grown coral off the coast of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. AP

Scientists grasp at straws to save corals from fish

Associated Press

Researchers trying to prevent predatory fish from devouring laboratory-grown coral are grasping at biodegradable straws in an effort to restore what some call the rainforest of the sea.

Scientists around the world have been working for years to address the decline of coral reef populations. Just last summer, reef rescue groups in South Florida and the Florida Keys were trying to save coral from rising ocean temperatures. Besides working to keep existing coral alive, researchers have also been growing new coral in labs and then placing them in the ocean.

But protecting the underwater ecosystem that maintains upwards of 25% of all marine species is not easy. Even more challenging is making sure coral grown in a laboratory and placed into the ocean doesn't become fish food.

Marine researcher Kyle Pisano said one problem is predators like parrot fish attempt to bite and destroy the newly transplanted coral in areas like South Florida, leaving them with less than a 40% survival rate. With projects calling for tens of thousands of coral to be planted over the next decade, the losses add up when coral pieces can cost more

The cage consists of a limestone disc surrounded by eight vertical straws. The device doesn't have a top, because the juvenile coral needs sunlight and the fish don't face downward to eat

than $100 (Rs 8,300) each.

Mr. Pisano and his partner, Kirk Dotson, have developed 'Coral Fort', claiming the small biodegradable cage made in part with drinking straws boosts the survival rate of transplanted coral to over 90%.

The fish eventually lose interest in the coral as it matures, but scientists need to protect the coral in the meantime. Stainless steel and PVC pipe barriers have been set up around transplanted coral in the past, but those barriers needed to be cleaned of algae growth and eventually removed.

Mr. Pisano had the idea of creating a protective barrier that would eventually dissolve, eliminating the need to maintain or remove it. He began conducting offshore experiments with biodegradable coral cages as part of a master's degree program at Nova Southeastern University. He used a substance called polyhydroxyalkanoate, a biopolymer derived from the fermentation of canola oil. PHA biodegrades in the ocean, leaving only water and carbon dioxide. His findings were published last year.

The coral cage consists of a limestone disc surrounded by eight vertical phade brand drinking straws. The device doesn't have a top, Mr. Pisano said, because the juvenile coral needs sunlight and the parrot fish don't generally want to position themselves facing downward to eat.

Mr. Dotson, a retired aerospace engineer, and Mr. Pisano formed Reef Fortify Inc. to further develop the patent-pending Coral Fort. The first batch of cages were priced at $12 (Rs 1,000) each, but the two believe that could change as production scales up.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Eighty years since the chance discovery of LSD

Vasudevan Mukunth

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

QUESTION 1

On April 16, 1943, 80 years ago this day, the Swiss chemist Albert Hoffman accidentally ingested a small quantity of LSD and discovered its unique effects on the human psyche, cognition, and perception. What does LSD stand for?

QUESTION 2

Hoffman had synthesised LSD five years prior by using water molecules to break down molecules of an organic compound produced by a fungus called _____. Fill in the blank. Hint: Ingesting this organic compound leads to a condition in humans called St. Anthony's fire.

QUESTION 3

For some time, researchers believed that LSD's effects mimicked those of schizophrenia, and thus the compound was held to be psychotomimetic. Around the mid-century, which English psychiatrist coined the term "psychedelic" to refer to LSD's effects, once it became clear they differed from those of schizophrenia because they could be psychologically beneficial?

QUESTION 4

Psychedelic substances are also called serotonergic hallucinogens because they activate receptors in the body just the way the neurotransmitter serotonin does, heightening the resulting symptoms. But LSD is unusual among psychedelics because it also stimulates the receptors of which other neurotransmitter?

QUESTION 5

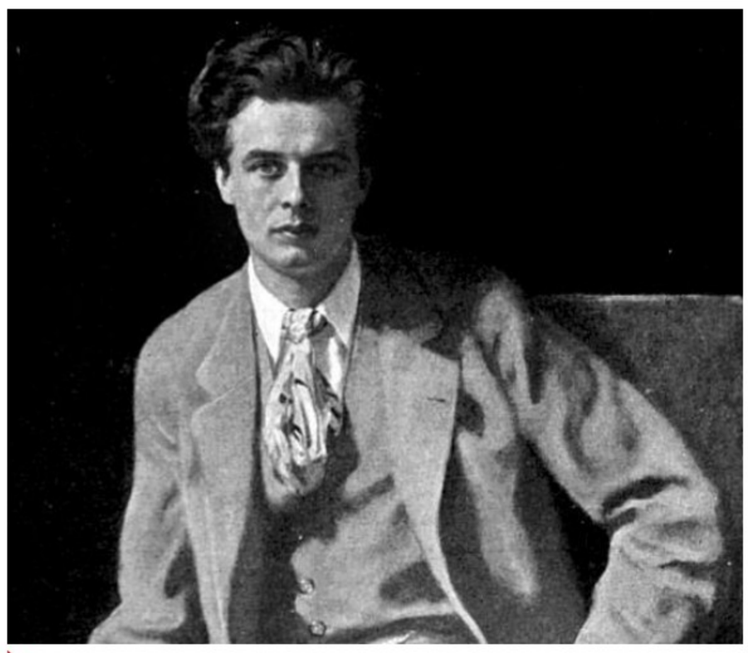
Name the program of illegal human experiments the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted from 1953 to 1973 in which it used psychoactive substances including LSD to inflict psychological torture to force confessions from people during interrogations.

Answers to April 11 quiz:

1. Unit used to measure the solid angle – **Ans: Steradian**
2. Unit used to measure capacitance – **Ans: Farad**
3. United used to measure the density of magnetic flux – **Ans: Tesla**
4. United used to measure radiation by its effects on biological tissue – **Ans: Sievert**
5. Unit used to measure the catalytic activity of an enzyme – **Ans: Katal**

Visual: **W.E. Weber**

First contact: K.N. Viswanathan | Muhammed Shahid Suri | Appa Rao M.V. | Jyot Prakash Gulati



Visual: Name this famous English writer who, after trying LSD, joined as an advisor to researchers at Harvard University in the 1960s working on similar drugs. PUBLIC DOMAIN

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Triple graduates, foreign educated among Independent candidates in Bengaluru

These candidates have been campaigning on issues they want to address, and many see the contest as a stepping stone for their political careers

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

While the qualifications and assets of candidates from major political parties are widely discussed in the days leading up to elections, for this year's Lok Sabha polls, at least eight Independent candidates with high educational qualifications, many who have studied abroad, are contesting from various constituencies in Bengaluru.

Each of these candidates has been campaigning on specific issues they want to address, and many see this contest as a stepping stone for their political careers. If they make a mark as an Independent in the fray, a mainstream political party may pick them in the days ahead, they hope.

Harisha Gowda (MBBS, MS), Subrahmanya Kumar K. (MBA from U.K. varsity and B.Pharm), Tintisha Hemachandra Sagar (MBA from Columbia University), and K.C. Janardhan (BA, PGDM-MM and PGDM-IR) are among the Independents contesting from Bengaluru South constituency.

Lok Sabha elections 2024

Dr. Gowda has been a surgeon for 20 years now. On his decision to contest as an Independent, he said: "The sad state of public healthcare facilities and rampant corruption pushed me into contesting elections to bring about policy changes. Any change from within the existing political party framework is difficult." Dr. Gowda said he is funding his campaign from his savings. He said people were tired of corrupt politicians and party-centric politics.

While some Independents say they will not join political parties, some of them have kept their options open.

Ms. Sagar is the daughter of D. Hemachandra Sagar, Chancellor of Daynanda Sagar University and former BJP MLA from Chickpet in 2008, who contested the seat from JD (S) in 2018. She believes that politics is the way to reach the masses and work on an exponential level, unlike private organisations where the scope is limited. "The JD(S) has a stronghold in rural areas whereas I am contesting from Bengaluru South. It made more sense to contest Independently," she said. When asked if she will consider aligning with the JD(S) or other political parties in the future, she said it was up to her voters.

Hope of reforms

From Bengaluru North constituency, well-qualified Independents are Sudha V. (B.Com, BA, MBA, B.Ed. and DEO) and K.V. Nanjundaswamy (Master of Library and Information Sciences).

Ms. Sudha, who works as a school principal, is contesting the elections with the hope of bringing reforms in the education sector. "People already have bad opinions about political parties. Hence, I decided to contest as an Independent," she said. However, she does not rule out joining a political party entirely. "If I win and I get a good chance from a political party which aligns with my principles, then I might consider joining them," she said.

Jayalakshmi M., advocate (MSW, LLM), and Vasanth Kumar E., HR professional (MBA), are among the prominent Independent candidates from Bengaluru Central constituency.

Mr. Kumar is not primarily a political person. But after experiencing corruption at many government offices, he decided to contest the elections. He worked in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for six months and voluntarily walked out, after the recent elections were announced. "The political parties today have combined religion, community, and party, which is why I want to contest as an Independent," he said.

Visibility a challenge

Most Independent candidates complain about lack of reach and visibility of their campaign to voters. "The focus is always on two major parties - be it among the citizens or the media. The citizens do not know who the other candidates are and the media does not make any efforts to create awareness. No one cares about Independent candidates," Mr. Kumar complained.

While all candidates in the fray maintain they are contesting to win, history doesn't seem to be in their favour. Karnataka has till date elected only three Independent MPs - S.M. Siddappa from Bijapur North in 1957, Dinakara Desai from Canara Lok Sabha constituency in 1967, and Sumalatha Ambareesh from Mandya in 2019. In the instances of Mr. Desai and Ms. Sumalatha, mainstream parties had withdrawn from the fray and supported them.

From Page One

One killed as scooter falls into pit dug up by BWSSB

The scooter that fell into the pit being retrieved. K. MURALI KUMAR

Saddam Hussein crossed over the first barricade, which was slightly open for pedestrians, but crashed into the second one, resulting in the scooter and the trio falling into the pit, traffic police said. Saddam lost control of the vehicle and crashed into the barricade, the police added.

A few passers-by alerted the police. They rushed to the spot and shifted the three injured to a nearby hospital, where Saddam Hussein was declared "brought dead". He was not wearing a helmet and had suffered head injuries. The other two are being treated.

Kengeri Traffic Police have registered a case of causing death due to negligence against both Saddam Hussein and the concerned BWSSB engineer.

BWSSB Chairman V. Ram Prasath Manohar, who visited the spot, said the water board had taken all necessary precautionary measures to ensure there were no such accidents. "We are sad that despite taking all precautionary measures such an accident has happened. A case has been filed with the police, and if the investigation finds any lapses, we will take action against the concerned officials," he said.

Congress accused of indulging in 'competitive populism'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In an oblique reference to the guarantee schemes of the Congress government, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of indulging in "competitive populism"

"Taking to competitive populism is when you make promises despite knowing that you cannot deliver them," Mr. Jaishankar told media persons in Bengaluru. "This is exactly what we are seeing in Karnataka at the State government level," he maintained.

Replying to a query, he described competitive populism as "irresponsible promises made by some State governments" and said: "Do not confuse this with the welfare programmes taken up by the Centre.

Going further into the subject, he said: "The Centre is giving five kg of rice to poor. This is not populism as this is part of basic obligations."

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar at a press meet at the BJP office in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Similarly, he said: "We have in the last 10 years built four crore houses for 20 crore people. Given piped water supply under Jal Jivan mission to 14 crore people. But this is not populism as piped water supply and shelter are the basic rights of people."

Coming down heavily on the Congress government in Karnataka with respect to its allegations of the Centre ignoring its plea for drought relief, Mr. Jaishankar accused it of misrepresenting its duties and that of the Centre.

'We are tracking establishment of U.S. consulate'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the Indian authorities were tracking the establishment of U.S. Consulate in Bengaluru.

"I am there to constantly remind them that this consulate has to be done quickly. Setting up the consulate was the request the PM had made when he went to the U.S. last year," he told media persons.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, APR. 16	
RISE 06:06	SET 18:32
RISE 12:40	SET 01:05
WEDNESDAY, APR. 17	
RISE 06:06	SET 18:32
RISE 13:32	SET 01:51
THURSDAY, APR. 18	
RISE 06:05	SET 18:33
RISE 14:21	SET 02:32

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	26
Mysuru	36	23
Bengaluru	35	22

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather will prevail. Morning will be comfortable.The day will be warm and humid afternoon. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C Rise in temperature. The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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Cong. files complaint against Tejasvi Surya

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Congress party and the depositors of Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank Niyamita – a cooperative bank at Basavanagudi, filed a complaint with the Election Commission of India on Monday against Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya, Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subramanya and others for heckling the customers of the bank who raised questions about the fate of the bank.

The incident occurred at a meeting of the bank's customers convened by Mr. Surya as part of his election campaign. The complaint alleged that when the bank's depositors confronted Mr. Surya over his failure to revive the bank and return all depositors' money, Mr. Surya and Mr. Subramanya insulted them using derogatory words.

The complaint alleged that the BJP leaders instructed the workers to heckle the customers. Sankara Guha Dwarakanath, general secretary, KPCC, the complainant in the case, alleged that BJP men also heckled election officials. The Congress took a dig at Mr. Surya, saying he had to flee a campaign event using the "emergency exit" when the depositors confronted him. Mr. Surya had landed in trouble when he allegedly opened the emergency exit of a plane.

Mr. Surya alleged that the Congress sent people to disrupt the meeting. He claimed that due to his persistent efforts and the reforms initiated by the Centre, "hope was restored for close to 80% of the depositors, with accounts amounting to ₹753 crore being cleared."

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Worth of poll related seizures made by EC authorities

4,658 in ₹ crore. Out of the total recoveries, the cash component stands at over ₹395 crore, while liquor stands at more than ₹489 crore. About 45% of the seizures are of drugs (₹2,069 crore). PTI

The funds the U.S. will grant Samsung to set up chip plants

6.4 in $ billion. The grants to semiconductor giant Samsung are for producing cutting-edge chips in Texas. Currently, the U.S. is highly dependent on Asia for chips and is vulnerable to shocks in semiconductor supply chains. AFP

Compensation Odisha fishermen demand for ban on fishing period

15,000 in ₹. Fishermen under the banner of the Odisha Traditional Fish Workers Union (OTFWU) demanded compensation for the two-month marine fishing ban imposed on Monday. PTI

Amount Nigeria's anti-graft agency recovered in probe

28.88 in $ million. Nigeria's anti-corruption agency recovered the amount after launching an investigation into alleged fraud at a government ministry responsible for tackling poverty. REUTERS

The level at which the rupee settled against the dollar on Monday

83.44 The rupee declined six paise against the U.S. dollar, in line with deep losses in equity markets and an elevated dollar amid geopolitical tensions. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Siachen: 40 years of Op Meghdoot

April 13, 2024 marks four decades since the Indian Army pre-empted Pakistan and occupied the Siachen glacier on the Saltoro ridge, overlooking the Nubra valley in the Karakoram ranges. While a ceasefire is in place, the operation continues to this day

FULL CONTEXT

Dinakar Peri

"The land is so barren and the passes so high that only the best of friends and fiercest of enemies come by" – reads a Ladakhi saying at Kumar post on the Siachen Glacier located at an altitude of 15,632 feet. The saying captures the conflict on the icy glacier between India and Pakistan. April 13, 2024 marks four decades since the Indian Army pre-empted Pakistan and occupied the glacier on the Saltoro ridge, overlooking the Nubra valley in the Karakoram ranges. Extreme weather is the biggest enemy on the glacier. Around 1,150 soldiers have lost their lives, majority of them to the vagaries of extreme weather.

Conflicting claims

Siachen, in Balti language means "land of roses' – 'Sia' is a kind of rose species that grows in the region and 'Chen' means "in abundance". However, it is known for being the world's highest and coldest battlefield. It sits at a very strategic location with Pakistan on the left and China on the right.

Siachen is a legacy of the Partition between India and Pakistan. While the Line of Control (LoC) was delineated and accepted by both sides upto NJ-9842 as part of the 1972 Simla agreement, the glacier itself was left unmarked. India claims the area based on the Jammu and Kashmir Accession Agreement of 1947 and the Karachi Agreement of 1949, which define the ceasefire line beyond NJ-9842 as running "Northwards to the glaciers". On the other hand, Pakistan interprets it as 'North-Eastwards' to claim the area beyond the Saltoro Ridge and beyond Siachen as its own. This would give Pakistan direct connectivity to China as well as strategic oversight over the Ladakh region and the crucial Leh-Srinagar highway, posing a serious threat to India.

The genesis of Operation Meghdoot

In the 1970s and 1980s, Pakistan began allowing foreign mountaineering expeditions, resorting to cartographic aggression, to add credence to its claims. Following intelligence inputs of imminent military action by Pakistan in early 1984, India moved to pre-empt it.

Mountaineering expeditions led by Col. Narinder 'Bull' Kumar to the Siachen glacier and Saltoro range as Commandant of the High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) in the early 1980s helped immensely in the planning process leading up to Operation Meghdoot. Based on these recce reports, the Indian Army launched 'Operation Meghdoot' on April 13, 1984 to capture the 76.4 km-long glacier. This was accomplished after a platoon of 4 Kumaon led by then Captain Sanjay Kulkarni (retired as Lt Gen) planted the Indian flag at Bilafond La at an altitude of 18,000 feet. Personnel from the Ladakh Scouts were also deployed via Cheetah helicopters by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Although the operation began in 1984, IAF helicopters were already operating in the glacier with the first landing of a Cheetah helicopter in October 1978. Additionally, in preparation for the operation, IAF's tactical and strategic airlifters, An-12s, An-32s and IL-76s transported stores and troops and air-dropped supplies to high altitude airfields, from where Mi-8, Mi-17, Cheetah and Chetak helicopters ferried men and material to the icy heights on the glacier, far above the limits helicopters were meant to be operated. Soon, about 300-odd troops were positioned on the strategically important peaks and passes of the glacier, the IAF recounted in a statement on Operation Meghdoot.

Cold battlefield: An IAF aircraft flies past as Operation Meghdoot marks 40 years of the Army's presence in the Siachen glacier, in Ladakh on April 13. ANI

In June 1987, Indian troops captured the Quaid post at 21,153-feet under Operation Rajiv. The post was later renamed the Bana top, in honour of then Naib Subedar Bana Singh (later Subedar Major and Hony Captain) from 8-Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAK LI) who was also conferred the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest wartime gallantry award for leading the attack in an impossible situation by scaling a 1,500 foot ice wall.

From 1984 to 2003, both sides were exchanging fire regularly. The guns finally fell silent in 2003 after the ceasefire agreement along the LoC and the 110km long Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Siachen. While the LoC has flared up on multiple occasions, ceasefire along the AGPL has held since. Operation Meghdoot continues to this day, becoming the longest continuing operation in the world.

A test of endurance

The actual Army posts are located at heights of 18,000 feet and above, with the Bana post being the highest on the glacier and Indira Col the highest point. At 18,000-19,000 feet, Indian and Pakistani posts face each other; however, at 20,000 feet and beyond, it is only India.

Operations on Siachen remain a test of human endurance and skill. It was especially so in the early days of Operation Meghdoot with limited high altitude clothing and equipment. While in the initial months, IAF operations saw the employment of helicopters and transport aircraft, the fighters entered the fray when a detachment of Hunter aircraft from the No. 27 squadron commenced operations in September 1984 from the high altitude airfield at Leh. In the next couple of years, the Hunters flew over 700 sorties from Leh carrying out fighter sweeps and simulated strikes to keep the adversary at bay. Later, live armament sorties were carried out at the high altitude firing range at Kar Tso, south of Leh, according to the IAF. The IAF inducted the Cheetal helicopters in the glacier in 2009. Cheetal is a Cheetah helicopter with a re-engineered engine offering better reliability and load carrying capability at high altitude.

Recent developments on the glacier

A lot has changed over the last four decades, especially in terms of technology, improvement in facilities and logistical support to ensure smooth operations and save lives. Some of the major improvements have been in the areas of habitat, communications, mobility, logistics and medical support and green initiatives.

The glacier is also bearing the brunt of climate change.

In 2015, the snout, which is the starting point of the glacier at the base camp, had receded by over a kilometre from where it originally was in 1984.

Elaborating on major enhancements in the last five years, officials say that mobile and data connectivity has improved considerably. "The introduction of VSAT technology has revolutionised communication on the glacier, providing troops with data and internet connectivity. This leap in technology has enhanced real-time situational awareness, telemedicine capabilities, and the well-being of our soldiers by keeping them connected with their families," one official said.

In addition to All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and ATV bridges improving mobility across the glacier, the induction of Chinook heavy-lift helicopters and logistic drones has significantly improved the supply of essential provisions to personnel deployed in posts that are cut off during winters. New logistics chains also means fresh rations and vegetables for forward posts. The availability of special clothing, mountaineering equipment, advanced rations and timely weather updates ensure that soldiers are better prepared to withstand temperatures that fall to -60 degrees.

Today, nearly all the aircraft of the IAF including Rafale, Su-30MKI, Chinook, Apache, Advanced Light Helicopter Mk III & Mk IV, Light Combat Helicopter Prachand, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, C-17, C-130 J, IL-76 and An-32 operate in support of Operation Meghdoot, the IAF said. Helicopters continue to remain the lifeline on the glacier supporting troops in remote posts. IAF's 114 helicopter unit along with the Army aviation continues to play a stellar role.

On the medical front, in addition to telemedicine nodes established by the ISRO for forward posts, the medical facilities in Partapur and Base Camp boast some of the best medical and surgical specialists in the country, Army officials say it includes state-of-the-art high altitude pulmonary oedema (HAPO) chambers, and oxygen generation plants besides life support systems.

What next?

Siachen along with Sir Creek have often been referred to as "low-hanging fruits" in the India-Pakistan conflict, especially considering the much more complicated Kashmir issue.

India and Pakistan have had dialogues on Siachen at the level of Defence Secretaries. On occasions when demilitarisation of the glacier was mooted, India while expressing willingness has called for authenticating the 110 km AGPL as the first step, which Pakistan has refused.

In January 2020, then Army Chief Gen. Manoj Mukund Narvane termed Siachen as the place from where a collusive threat from China and Pakistan was maximum while stressing on the importance of keeping that particular area always in India's possession.

Siachen overlooks Shaksgam valley which is part of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and adjacent to Siachen was ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963 – a year after the India-China war. The 2020 standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh and the continuing tensions all along the Line of Actual Control has only further complicated any settlement of Siachen.

Siachen is probably not so 'low hanging' any more.

THE GIST

- Siachen is known for being the world's highest and coldest battlefield. It sits at a very strategic location with Pakistan on the left and China on the right.
- In the 1970s and 1980s, Pakistan began allowing foreign mountaineering expeditions, resorting to cartographic aggression, to add credence to its claims over the glacier. Following intelligence inputs of imminent military action by Pakistan in early 1984, India moved to pre-empt it.
- In January 2020, then Army Chief Gen. Manoj Mukund Narvane termed Siachen as the place from where a collusive threat from China and Pakistan was maximum while stressing on the importance of keeping that particular area always in India's possession.

Yaduveer's gesture and a message

On Monday, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Mysuru, the BJP candidate for Mysuru Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, along with his wife Trishikha Wadiyar, visited the venue of the rally.

He lent a helping hand to Mysuru City Corporation staff who were cleaning the ground and thanked them.

"It was my duty to ensure the ground is clean after Mr. Modi's event and keeping the city clean is in line with his initiative of Swatch Bharath Abhiyan," said Mr. Yaduveer. With Mysuru sliding from the cleanest city rank in 2014 to 27th rank this year, Mr. Yaduveer's gesture was interpreted by some as his seriousness to ensure that the city regains its rank. However, some others on social media called it "election stunt."

BJP candidate for Mysuru Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, along with his wife Trishikha Wadiyar, at Maharaja's College Grounds in Mysuru on Monday. M.A. SRIRAM

Speculation over Savadi's meeting with Sanganna

Laxman Savadi, Congress leader and MLA for Athani, met BJP leader and incumbent LS member from Koppal Karadi Sanganna on Monday, triggering fresh speculations in the backdrop of the latter's resentment against his party leadership for the denial of party ticket to contest the Lok Sabha elections this time.

BJP denied ticket to Mr. Sanganna, who won the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, to field Basavaraj Kyavator, a fresh face. Mr. Sanganna has raised a banner of revolt and speculations were rife that he would join Congress. Mr. Savadi quit the BJP in the last Assembly elections after he was denied ticket and joined Congress to win from Athani. However, Mr. Savadi said, "I cordially met Mr. Sanganna. We did not discuss politics."

"The BJP is essentially against the notion of women's empowerment and that is why they are campaigning against guarantee schemes.

LAXMI HEBBALKAR
Minister

Over 50% voters vote from home

A total of 27,172 (55.90%) voters of the 48,609 voters (aged above 85 and persons with disabilities) who opted to vote from home in the 14 constituencies that go to polls on April 26 have voted from April 13 till Monday. This includes 20,449 voters aged above 85 and 6,723 persons with disabilities.

"It is a Lok Sabha election and the achievements of Modi will be mentioned. We will also refer to the achievements of the previous BJP govt.

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI
Former Chief Minister

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah holding a roadshow in support of Congress candidate for Bengaluru South constituency Sowmya Reddy for the Lok Sabha elections, at Jayanagar in Bengaluru on April 8. ANI

HDK apologises for his comment on women

He hits out at Cong. and lists instances where its leaders made derogatory remarks on women

DAMAGE CONTROL

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Insisting that he had not insulted women with his remark on guarantees, former Chief Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) candidate from Mandya Lok Sabha constituency H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday, however, tendered an apology "if his statements have hurt their feelings."

"I have no ego hassle in expressing regret if my statements on women has hurt their feelings. If women Congress workers are hurt, I will apologise to them too. I have not done anything wrong and I will leave it to the people to decide," he told presspersons here.

His apology over a statement made during an election rally at Turuvekere in Tumakuru had triggered a row with Karnataka State Women's Commission chairperson stating that the body would issue a notice. During his attack on the Congress government's guarantee schemes, he had said that women in rural areas "were going astray due to guarantees."

Janata Dal (Secular) State unit president H.D. Kumaraswamy addressing a press conference in Bengaluru on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Posers to Congress

Continuing his attack on Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Mr. Kumaraswamy pointed out instances of Congress leaders making derogatory comments on actors Hema Malini and Kangana Ranaut. "Is this how you respect and protect women? Have you (Mr. Shivakumar) forgotten the statement made by (former Speaker) K.R. Ramesh Kumar in the Assembly on rape? Did you not notice what your MLA Shamanur Shivashankarappa said about women BJP candidate?" he asked.

Mr. Kumaraswamy said in justification of his statement on guarantees, "I have only warned the women that by giving ₹ 2,000, the government is pickpocketing ₹ 5,000 from their husbands pockets. I have said that women need to be financially empowered. When women had raised issues of arrack and lottery ruining their families, I banned them despite knowing that it would have financial implications on the exchequer."

DKS hits back

Hitting back, Mr. Shivakumar said, "He is desperately criticising me because the women of the State have turned against him due to his derogatory statement against them. Congress is trying to make women self-reliant, while Mr. Kumaraswamy's statement is a blot on society... He has run away from Ramanagara, and he will lose in Mandya too."

DKS woos Vokkaligas in Mysuru and Kodagu

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

D.K. Shivakumar

With support of the dominant Vokkaliga community becoming crucial in the elections to Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar held meetings with leaders and members of the Vokkaliga community in Kodagu and Mysuru on Sunday.

BJP's Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar and Congress's M. Lakshmana are engaged in a direct fight in Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency. Though JD (S) has not fielded a candidate in Mysuru, it has extended support to the candidate from BJP with whom it has entered into an alliance.

Mr. Shivakumar's meetings with community leaders and members in Kodava Samaja in Madikeri and a hotel in Mysuru were held on the same day as former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda shared the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Mysuru rally.

In Mysuru, Mr. Shivakumar said the Congress had fielded a Vokkaliga candidate in Mr. Lakshmana after a gap of 47 years. After pointing out that BJP had denied ticket to Prathap Simha, a Vokkaliga, he called upon the members of the community to retain the seat for Vokkaliga representatives. "If you lose the Mysuru seat now, you will not get it again," he told the community leaders.

Mr. Shivakumar also pointed out that the Congress will run the government for 10 years, hinting that he would become the Chief Minister in future. He assured to protect the interests of the community as head of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee. He said there was not much hope for the members of the community in BJP, and that the JD (S), which has entered into an alliance with BJP, "will soon cease to exist."

Candidates sweat it out in sweltering heat

As the sun beats down relentlessly, Lok Sabha candidates and party leaders are literally sweating it out to connect with their voters. How are they managing to beat the heat?

Early start

Almost all the candidates *The Hindu* spoke to said that, for one, they start early in the day – around 7 a.m. and wind up the forenoon session by 11 a.m. before resuming the campaign after 4 p.m.

Some start even earlier than 7 a.m. to interact with morning walkers. However, some candidates are undeterred and going about all day wearing caps and covering their heads with cloth.

Ninety-one-year-old former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, whose party has entered into an alliance with BJP, has started campaigning for both the parties in full swing. The senior-most star campaigners in this election, Mr. Deve Gowda is visiting remote areas seeking votes for the alliance candidates. He has been advised by doctors to limit his fluid intake to around 1.5 litres a day, said his close aide.

"He leaves home early after breakfast and his next meal is only dinner. All he takes in between are fruits and he keeps sipping buttermilk and water. His diet is mainly ragi mudde (ragi balls), soppu saaru (greens with lentils) and kalu saaru (pulses curry)," the aide said.

His son, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy who has recently undergone a transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI), has been advised to avoid dust and smoke. As both Mr. Kumaraswamy and his father are diabetic, they avoid fruit juices and consume tender coconut water, said the aide.

Hydration vital

Bengaluru Rural BJP candidate C.N. Manjunath, former Director of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, said it is advisable for candidates to keep themselves hydrated.

"With diabetes and hypertension being the common ailments of most candidates, they should avoid fruit juices and have buttermilk or water. It is also better if they have a diet with less oil and spice, preferably vegetarian, as a heavy meal can cause drowsiness and indigestion. This may lead to excessive sweating and fluid loss. Most importantly, they should keep a tab on their daily blood sugar levels," he said.

"With supporters bursting crackers and expressing their support by garlanding us, it sometimes gets claustrophobic. I have advised Mr. Kumaraswamy to not come out of the car till the smoke of the crackers settles down. I am also following the same," he said.

Keeping throat fit

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who along with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, has the responsibility of ensuring the party's victory, is taking all care to stay fit. "He has been avoiding junk, spicy and non-vegetarian food. He is taking lots of fluids including buttermilk and tender coconut water to keep himself hydrated. Most importantly, he sips hot water in between and after his public speeches to avoid throat infection," said his media adviser K.V. Prabhakar.

Eminent doctor, a poll debutant, takes on warhorse in Gabbar Singh's lair

B.S. Satish Kumar
BENGALURU

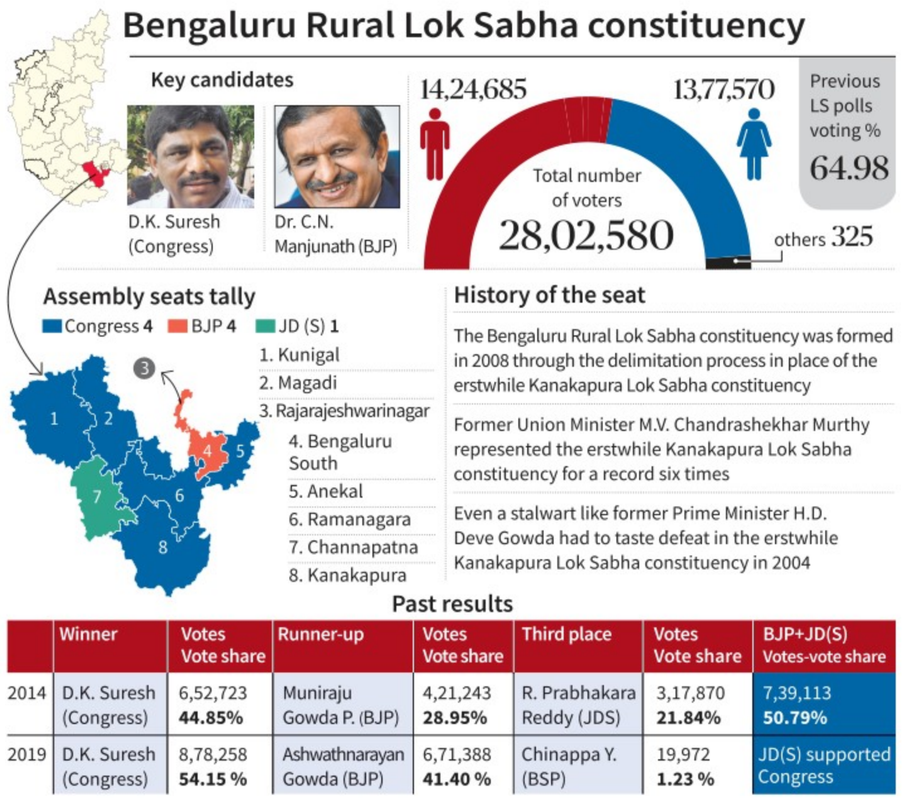
Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha seat, characterised by the rocky areas of Ramanagara where the famous Bollywood classic *Sholay* was shot, comprises eight Assembly segments spread over three districts of Ramanagara, Bengaluru Urban, and Tumakuru.

A politically complex region, its comprises agrarian zones in Kunigal, Channapatna, Ramanagara, Magadi and Kanakapura taluks as well as IT corridor of Electronics City in Bengaluru.

The backward Magadi taluk lies here and so does the industrial township in Bidadi with its Toyota unit. There are hutments in villages and posh apartments in Rajarajeshwarinagar of Bengaluru city.

This constituency had become a bastion of Congress as incumbent MP D.K. Suresh, brother of Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D. K. Shivakumar, had achieved a hat-trick.

However, it has now attracted attention as noted cardiologist C.N. Manjunath is making his political debut by taking on the powerful "D.K. brothers."



Past results

	Winner	Votes Vote share	Runner-up	Votes Vote share	Third place	Votes Vote share	BJP+JD(S) Votes-vote share
2014	D.K. Suresh (Congress)	6,52,723 **44.85%**	Muniraju Gowda P. (BJP)	4,21,243 **28.95%**	R. Prabhakara Reddy (JDS)	3,17,870 **21.84%**	7,39,113 **50.79%**
2019	D.K. Suresh (Congress)	8,78,258 **54.15 %**	Ashwathnarayan Gowda (BJP)	6,71,388 **41.40 %**	Chinappa Y. (BSP)	19,972 **1.23 %**	JD(S) supported Congress

Cardiologist's entry

Dr. Manjunath, who retired this year as the head of the government-run Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, has been popular as he turned the government hospital into one of the largest heart care centres in South East Asia.

Mr. Suresh is a powerful leader and a key strategist of this region.

He has maintained constant touch with most of the villages through his network of party leaders and has some or the other development works to his credit. He also played a proactive role during COVID days, remember locals. He was the lone MP from Congress to get elected amidst a strong "Modi wave" in 2019. Of the eight Assembly segments coming under the seat, five are held by the Congress.

In this context, things should have been easier for him as his brother, the Vokkaliga face of the Congress, is the deputy Chief Minister.

But Mr. Suresh is facing a tough competition for the first time from debutant Dr. Manjunath.

This is due to various reasons including forging of an alliance between the BJP and JD (S) which has strengthened the Opposition. The alliance leaders claim that the combination of votes would outnumber the Congress in most constituencies.

Also, the two Assembly segments, Rajarajeshwarinagar and Bengaluru South, located in Bengaluru city and represented by the BJP MLAs, have turned out to be tricky for Congress due to BJP's strong network. These two Assembly segments, along with Channapatna, held by the JD(S), together account for over 50% of the total votes in the seat.

Congress's pitch

The ruling Congress is heavily banking on its five "guarantee" schemes of free bus travel for women, an incentive of ₹ 2,000 per month to women, free rice and power supply schemes as well as unemployment dole.

They hope that women would stand with them as they are major beneficiaries of the schemes. The Congress is also trying to create awareness on its "My tax - My right" campaign in which it has accused the Centre of showing step-motherly attitude towards Karnataka in devolution of Central taxes, grants and drought assistance. In fact it was Mr. Suresh, who had aggressively raised this issue in the Lok Sabha.

While the BJP is countering this with the narrative that the guarantee schemes are only "temporary" and would not help in the long run, they are heavily dependent on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image. The JD (S), meanwhile, is trying to push the point that their leader H.D. Kumaraswamy is the "architect of Ramanagara" as it was carved out as a district during his tenure as Chief Minister.

This constituency is being watched keenly as any upset here may provide a handle to detractors of Mr. Shivakumar to argue against him staking a claim to Chief Minister's post at a later date.

The BJP and JD (S), which lost miserably in the 2023 Assembly polls, are hoping for a setback for the Congress here as they think it would trigger a political tussle within the Congress, leading to political instability.

CM's poser to Gowda on his statement during Modi event

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah shot back at former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda a day after the latter took potshots at him while sharing stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mysuru on Sunday. Mr. Gowda had on Sunday said that "a Chief Minister representing six crore people should not question a Prime Minister who represents a hundred crore people."

In a statement on Monday, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that he was "both surprised and saddened" by the statement. Addressing Mr. Gowda, he said, "You have led a regional party for many years and have been a consistent critic of the Union government and Prime Ministers. Why, then, do you choose to adopt such a submissive stance at this stage in your life?" He further said that we are part of a federal democracy where neither is the Prime Minister an autocrat, nor a Chief Minister a mere subordinate. "Both hold positions of equal stature, irrespective of their age," he said. Mr. Siddaramaiah reminded Mr. Gowda that just a few months ago, his son H.D. Kumaraswamy used harsh language to criticise Mr. Modi.

He further said that it is everyone's right to oppose and question the Union government.

BUILDING BLOCKS

How does hydrocarbon extraction happen?

Hydrocarbons are found in underground reservoirs created when a more resistant rock type overlays a less resistant one, in effect creating a lid that causes hydrocarbons to accumulate below it

Vasudevan Mukunth

Over millennia, mighty geological processes in the earth's crust heated and compressed together pieces of life-forms that had been dead for a while. Eventually, this mulch of organic matter accumulated as hydrocarbons inside rock formations. The two Industrial Revolutions were the result mainly of people finding a way to extract these hydrocarbons and using them to drive many great engines, whose foul breath polluted the air and water and eventually gave us global warming.

Where are hydrocarbons located?

The most common forms in which these hydrocarbons exist in subterranean rock formations are natural gas, coal, crude oil, and petroleum. They are usually found in underground reservoirs created when a more resistant rock type overlays a less resistant one, in effect creating a lid that causes hydrocarbons to accumulate below it. Such formations are important because otherwise, the hydrocarbons would float to the surface and dissipate.

Experts use the tools, methods, and techniques of the field of petroleum geology to assess these rocks, including to check for their porosity and permeability. If a rock formation is highly porous, it could hold a larger quantity of hydrocarbons. Similarly, the more permeable a rock is, more easily the hydrocarbons will flow through it. The primary source of hydrocarbons in this rocky underground is called kerogen: lumps of organic matter. Kerogen can be deposited from three possible sources: as the remains of a lake (lacustrine), of a larger marine ecosystem, or of a terrestrial ecosystem. Rocks surrounding the kerogen can become warmer, more compact over time, exerting forces on the kerogen that cause it to break down. Lacustrine kerogen yields waxy oils; marine kerogen, oil and gas; and terrestrial kerogen, light oils, gas, and coal. The rock containing the kerogen is called the source rock, and petroleum geologists are tasked with looking for it, understanding its geophysical and thermal characteristics, and characterising its ability to yield hydrocarbons. They also undertake modelling activities informed by observational data and dig smaller exploration wells to estimate the amount of hydrocarbons there, and report it to the relevant regulatory body.

Once a particular location is determined to be a profitable source of hydrocarbons, drilling can begin.

How are the hydrocarbons accessed?

Drilling and reservoir engineers are responsible for extracting as much of the hydrocarbons as is gainful without damaging the reservoir, to which end they deploy a variety of methods.

The first task is to create a production well, the principal hole through which the reservoir will be drained to the surface; its location is chosen to maximise the amount of drainage. The well is created with a drilling machine. The drill consists of the drill pipe, the drill collars towards the bottom, and the drill bit at the bottom. The drill bit is the object that breaks through the rock, creating a hole as it tunnels further down.

The outline of an oil pump. ISTOCKPHOTO

Once the tunnelling is underway, engineers lower steel casings that are slightly less wide than the hole itself into the tunnel, and pump cement slurry in the gap between the outer edge of the tunnel and the casings. As the cement solidifies, it protects the upper parts of the tunnel from caving in and prevents fluids in the surrounding soil from entering the well. The tunnel is also filled with drilling fluid, which reaches and swirls around the drill bit. Its primary purposes are to keep the bit from overheating and to bring the pieces of rock being cut away with it when it is pumped to the surface, where they can be removed from the tunnel.

The pressure at which the drilling fluid is delivered needs to be carefully controlled or it could force the hydrocarbons in the source rock to rush into the gap between the casing and the drill string (pipe + collar + bit) and erupt on the surface like a volcano of oil. Modern drilling setups include mechanical valves called blowout preventers to trap the gushing in the borehole, and manage the equipment already inside as necessary.

The process of recording the rock cuttings by depth and studying their properties is called mud-logging.

As the drill bit descends, the length of the drill pipe is increased by tacking on extensions; it can also be pulled up if it needs replacing.

Today, all of these processes are conducted by sophisticated drilling rigs, which also come with generators and batteries to power various steps of the drilling process. These rigs can also be installed offshore, with additional facilities to boost their stability and aid extraction through the water column.

How are the hydrocarbons extracted?

Once the production well has been drilled, it has to be prepared to drain the hydrocarbons – a step called completing. Here, engineers remove the drill string out of the borehole and punch small holes into the casing. More often than not, the pressure inside the well is sufficiently lower than in the surrounding rock for the hydrocarbons to start flowing into the well and rise up on their own. And as they rise, they are forced to exit at the top via a narrower tube – which is installed to, among other things, encourage the fluids to flow in only one direction (out).

The flow of hydrocarbons ends the completion stage and begins the production stage, when the most important aspects of the extraction operation are the systems at the well's head controlling its outflow using valves. Sometimes, the pressure difference may be too low to bring the hydrocarbons to the surface. A common solution in some oil-rich sites is to use pump jacks, facilities seen dotting the American midwest with a hammer-shaped piston moving up and down in languid fashion. They draw mechanical power from, say, an engine to lift up hydrocarbons from the bottom of a well. Some long-standing wells may require additional components or having old ones replaced to get more hydrocarbon out of them; these tasks are called workovers.

The production profile of a well can be split into three phases: primary, secondary, and tertiary, depending on the methods required to maintain production. The primary phase banks on natural processes, like pressure differences between the reservoir and the well and less dense compounds floating to the top. Secondary interventions are concerned with inducing artificial pressure in the rock to maintain the differential (for example, by injecting water into it or diluting the hydrocarbon mix to help it flow better). The tertiary phase is focused on forcing the remainder into the well. Steam injection is a common example of such an enhanced recovery method. An on-site gas turbine generates electricity while its waste heat is routed to a steam generator. The resulting steam is pumped into the rock: its heat makes heavy-oil hydrocarbons less viscous and more willing to flow while its pressure pushes them out. When recovering petroleum, for example, the well may yield about 15%, 45%, and 15% of its hydrocarbon volume in three respective phases.

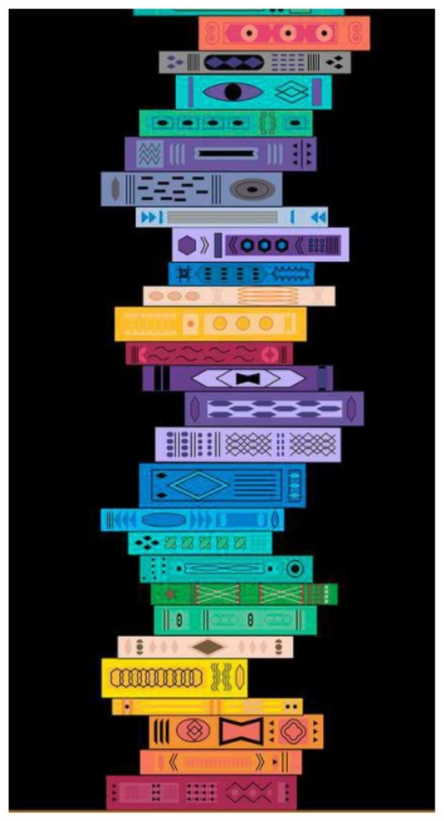
What happens when a well is depleted?

As the extraction rates indicate, a well needn't be fully depleted before the extraction process ends. The process's economics matter greatly: the contractor may stop extraction if it's no longer profitable to keep extracting from a well.

A well thus abandoned needs to be plugged so that its contents – both the hydrocarbons and the gases accumulating in the borehole– don't escape into their surroundings. These plugs can be temporary, in case the project proponent wishes to recommission it later, or permanent. A common issue with improperly plugged wells is that the plugs deteriorate and fail, either because of quality issues or due to nearby disturbances.

The most exhaustive way to conclude operations at a well, whether on land or offshore, is to decommission it, but this process is expensive and often commercially infeasible for the proponent. Improperly abandoned wells are a major source of methane emissions – to go with the emissions released during the production and use of various components required to extract hydrocarbons.

One 2018 study estimated that 9,000 oilfields in 90 countries released 1.7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2015 alone.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Grin like a Cheshire cat (C. N. Bhagavan, Hyderabad)."

"It means 'to be constantly smiling widely for no apparent reason'. It has a connotation of 'smugness or vacuousness.' The expression dates from the 18th century and was popularised by Lewis Carrol through his *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. When Alice asked the Duchess why the cat grinned so broadly and inscrutably, the Duchess said, "It's a Cheshire cat and that's why". The Cheshire cat in the book used to disappear, leaving behind its grin! It is believed that in the 18th century, Cheshire cheese was sold in the shape of a cat with a grin on its face. From this we get the expression."

"Finger (C. Jeyaraj, Madras)."

"In Indian languages, no distinction is made between 'fingers' and 'toes': 'finger' is used for the movable parts at the end of the hands as well as the feet. In English, 'toe' refers to the movable parts at the end of the feet. The names of the fingers are: thumb, index finger or forefinger, middle finger, ring finger, little finger. Sometimes the little finger is called 'baby finger.' It is also called 'pinkie' by Scots and Americans.

There are no special names for the toes. They are numbered one to five. You refer to the big toe, second toe, third or middle toe, fourth toe, little or baby toe. In Latin, 'index' means 'the forefinger.' The fourth finger was used as the ring finger by the Romans and the Greeks as they thought that a nerve ran through it to the heart."

"Letter of the 6th instant (A. G. Manoj Saldana, Shimoga)."

" 'I received your letter of the 6th instant' means 'I received your letter dated 6th of this month'. 'Instant' means 'of the current month'. This was being generally used in commercial correspondence, though now it is rarely used in English-speaking countries. It is widely used in India in private and business correspondence. Like Indian English, there is also Indian business English and it has an archaic flavour."

"Putsch (G. Sedouram, Pondicherry)."

" It means 'a sudden, secretly planned attempt to remove a government by force.' The 'u' is pronounced like the 'u' in 'put' and tsch' like the 'ch' in 'touch.' It is a German word.

The current topic of discussion is the putsch in the Soviet Union."

Published in The Hindu on September 17, 1991.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Charlie Chaplin was born on this day in 1889. A quiz on the life of the English comic actor, filmmaker and composer

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Radhika Santhanam

QUESTION 1

In the 2000s, declassified British archives showed that this well-known author had secretly accused Chaplin of being a communist. An adjective derived from this author's pen name is used to describe totalitarian and authoritarian social practices. Name this author.

QUESTION 2

Name the title of Chaplin's first war film, a comedy set in France, which starred his half-brother.

QUESTION 3

Chaplin was prosecuted in 1944 under this Act in a case stemming from a paternity suit involving the actor Joan Barry. This Act made it a federal crime to transport women across federal state lines for prostitution, debauchery, or even sex between unmarried persons. What is the name of this controversial Act?

QUESTION 4

Long after the shift to sound, Chaplin continued to make silent movies. Name one such successful film in which Chaplin's character befriends an alcoholic millionaire.

QUESTION 5

A French journal, named after a Chaplin film, closed in 2019 after 74 years. Its founders were two existentialist French philosophers, a couple who never got married. Name the two philosophers and the Chaplin film which inspired them to name their journal.

QUESTION 6

Chaplin's first talkie was a satire of two dictators. Name them.

Visual question:

This is a statue of Charlie Chaplin in the city where he was born. Which famous character of the comedian does it portray?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The ports the Titanic called on before disaster struck. **Ans: Cherbourg (France) and Queenstown (Cobh) in Ireland**

2. Survivors were picked up by this ship. **Ans: Carpathia**

3. The relevance of J. Bruce Ismay with respect to the Titanic. **Ans: He was the chairman of White Star Line that operated Titanic and was branded a coward for taking a lifeboat ignoring women and children**

4. The novel written by Morgan Robertson. **Ans: *Futility, or the Wreck of the Titan***

5. Lifeboats on the Titanic had a total capacity to take on these many passengers. **Ans: 1,178**

6. The significance of the words "Hard astarboard! Stand by the engines!". **Ans: The last words reportedly spoken by Titanic's crew before the giant vessel started going down**

7. The explorer who discovered the wreck of the Titanic in 1985. **Ans: Robert Ballard**

Visual: Name the organisation. **Ans: International Ice Patrol**

Early Birds: K. N. Viswanathan| Jyot Prakash Gulati| Rajeev Jain| Saheni George| Prashant Nain

Word of the day

Surfeit:

the state of being more than full; the quality of being so overabundant that prices fall; eating until excessively full

Synonyms: overabundance, excess, glut, oversupply

Usage: *Last summer, we had a surfeit of mangoes.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/surfeitpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈsɜːfɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

How Early Bird initiative is using birds as a window to nature education

Early Bird has recently curated *Prakrutiya Pettige,* a nature education kit in Kannada, and given them to 500 of Karnataka's Arivu Kendras or Gram Panchayat libraries

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Facilitators at Early Bird.

A scene from the librarians' workshop. EARLY BIRD

We can't really hate birds," says Abhisheka Krishnagopal, Programme Manager, Early Bird, an initiative by the Nature Conservation Foundation, which aims to introduce young people to the wonder of birds.

Birds, besides being integral to the ecosystems they inhabit are, after all, a vital part of our collective culture–whether it be in our sculptures in ancient monuments or our traditional textiles. Not surprisingly, they are essential characters in mythologies and stories, capturing the human imagination because they are so aesthetically appealing and capable of flight.

It also helps that they are so easily accessible. "You don't have to go into a forest to see them. You can spot them from the window of your house," says Abhisheka, who feels birds are a wonderful window to nature.

It is why birds are easy to introduce to children, helping foster a lifelong sensitivity and awareness about our natural world. In keeping with this idea, Early Bird has recently curated *Prakrutiya Pettige*, a nature education kit in Kannada, and given them to 500 of Karnataka's Arivu Kendras or Gram Panchayat libraries. "This project aims to encourage rural librarians to take on the role of bird educators to help children develop a deeper connection with nature through birds," she says.

Once the children become familiar with the birds around them, she hopes they can start monitoring the local birds in their village. This way, these libraries can be both a space for documenting biodiversity as well as a hub of knowledge exchange related to nature, she says, thus "motivating children to become stewards of their local biodiversity."

How it began

In late 2023, Abhisheka and Garima Bhatia had gone to meet Senior IAS officer and Additional Chief Secretary, Panchayati Raj, Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, who had played a vital role in the Oduva Belaku (the light of reading) movement of Karnataka. "During COVID lockdown, she had revived 5,600 libraries across the state, and we had heard about it," Abhisheka recalls. "We thought we could meet her and see if there is a possibility of introducing nature education into these libraries."

Uma Mahadevan, she says, was very interested in the work Early Bird had been doing; so, she suggested that, as a pilot, Early Bird supply learning resources to some of these libraries. "She asked us to put together a proposal on how we could go about this," states Abhisheka. "We curated the materials we planned to provide these libraries, and then have a hybrid training programme online and offline."

The initiative involved travelling across the state and conducting in-person workshops in all 31 districts of Karnataka, training 16-20 librarians in each district. "We collaborated with 11 external resource people (bird educators of Karnataka) who underwent training conducted by Early Bird on how to connect children to birds through art, games and nature walks," she says. Since the 2024 Lok Sabha elections were around the corner, the team was asked to finish the training before the model code-of-conduct came in place, she adds. "We trained 500 librarians in the month of March," she says.

Greater coucal. EARLY BIRD

The team drew on existing material such as the Early Bird's flashcards, posters, pocket guides, games and learnings from their Birding Buddy workshops to come up with nally chosen. "The Zilla Panchayat helped organise the workshop," says Abhisheka, who designed the workshop. One of the challenges she faced was to design it taking into account that some of these places may not have a projector or even power. "The workshop included games, art activities, nature journalling and bird watching that didn't require technology," she says.The team drew on existing material such as the Early Bird's flashcards, posters, pocket guides, games and learnings from their Birding Buddy workshops to come up with teaching methods and techniques for children. "Our materials are fun to learn, and we always wanted it to reach kids in rural areas," she says.

According to her, the current education system often takes children away from nature, even if they are surrounded by it. Often, since they end up gleaning their knowledge about wildlife from books rather than their immediate environment, "they know more about zebras and giraffes and hummingbirds than the birds in their backyards," says Abhisheka. Using games and activities to expose them to their local ecosystem is very powerful because it helps children stay more engaged. "Lecture sessions don't help. Before children gain knowledge, it is important to hold their attention and focus," she says, pointing out that when children start having fun, learning comes automatically.

Bird art at the librarians' workshop. EARLY BIRD

White-cheecked Barbet.

Why libraries

While direct outreach has always been an important aspect of the Early Bird Programme, in general, it usually involves reaching out to teachers and educators. "Somehow libraries never struck us; we looked at them as a space for books and where people could come and read," she says. "We could never imagine it to be this interactive space." Early Bird's focus on using libraries was surprisingly effective. "The enthusiasm I saw in the librarians was addictive," Abhisheka says, recalling how they (the librarians) told her about children hanging in the library all day and not wanting to go home. "There is so much happening. It is not just about books, but also about activities and interactions."

The 500 librarians who have attended the workshops are currently working with children and putting their skills to use on the ground. "We have given the librarians small assignments to see if they're facing challenges, and they have to report back to us if they are facing challenges," she says.

Abhisheka also hopes to take the programme to even more libraries after the election. The project, funded by the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, is still in its pilot stage now. However, if successful, there is a possibility that it will be taken to all the Gram Panchayat libraries in Karnataka. "Reaching close to 6,000 libraries is a wonderful thing," believes Abhisheka."It is almost like you are taking nature education to every corner of the state this way."

Activists hold BWSSB, Ground Water Authority accountable for water crisis in city

They say that the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board woke up to the need for water conservation only when the crisis reached its peak

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

As temperature keeps soaring in Bengaluru, residents collect water from a tanker. AP and PTI

As the water shortage in Bengaluru continues, the citizens and activists are now blaming the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and Karnataka Ground Water Authority (KGWA) for the mismanagement despite there were warnings about water woes well in advance.

The BWSSB on March 7 issued a notification ordering a ban on potable water for non-essential purposes under sections 33 and 34 of BWSSB Act 1964. But this came only when the crisis reached its peak.

No lessons learnt

Ramprasad, from Friends of Lakes, speaking to *The Hindu*, said every four years the city reels under water problems and the previous one was in 2019. "It is unfortunate that the BWSSB, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and KGWA have not learnt any lessons from the mistakes. The agencies had warning about this crisis in advance and it did not act," he said.

The BWSSB act clearly states that drinking water must not be utilised for non essential purposes like washing cars, watering gardens, construction work, road laying etc. For this treated water or recycled water should be used. If this was implemented there would had been sufficient water not just for 1.3 crore population but to cater to 2 crore people. On the other hand, rejuvenation of lakes has stopped flow of water to water bodies due to which ground water has further receded, Ramprasad pointed out.

Water for luxury

"The BWSSB is also supplying more than required water for apartments even during the crisis. As per the international standards, per person everyday water requirement is 135 litres. But there are instances of BWSSB supplying up to 280 litres. Anything above 135 litres means the supplied water is being consumed for luxury or non-essential purposes. On the other hand 35% of Cauvery water meant for the city is wasted in leakages. This means of the 1400 million litres per day (MLD) that Bengaluru draws, 500 MLD is lost as leakage and nearly 150 MLD allocated for industries, 750 MLD is left for the people to consume everyday. This leakage has to be fixed," he said.

Sandeep Anirudhan, Convenor, Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru, said the KGWA's failure to check digging of illegal borewells has also contributed to the crisis. "Despite our campaign against illegal borewells, the problem still persists. Under the Karnataka Ground Water Authority Act, 1999, a person who wants to dig borewell has to secure permission. But this is not implemented on the ground. The collective failure of KGWA, BWSSB, Wetland Authority created this crisis which could had been averted," Anirudhan said.

Loss of wetland

He further said the loss of wetland, which is sink hole for water, is causing ground water depletion and the government should take the officials in the Wetland Authority to task on this,

Srinivas Reddy, a member of the Bengaluru Navanirmana Party, said when the water crisis ends in June, the BWSSB will stop the implementation of the ban and the problem will resurface yet again.

"This is cyclic. The BWSSB has also failed to stop usage of borewell water by the industries and it took a severe crisis for the water board to promote usage of treated water," he said.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 16, 1974

VC Suggest 14 Year Education Pattern

Bangalore, April 15: The Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University, Dr. H. Narasimhaiah to-day favoured a reduction in the total period of education from the existing 15 years to 14 for award of a basic degree. He said the present syllabus for the three-year B.Sc. course was rather high. It was some kind of specialisation in science which was not necessary, as many students who took to this course just had a bias towards science but were not interested in any specialisation. But at the moment the high syllabus was imposed on every student. He therefore, expressed himself in favour of two types of courses - one for those who would be satisfied with a mere B.A. or B.Sc. basic degree course and the other for those who wanted to do specialisation (like honours).

Raw Materials Bank to Aid Small Industries

Bangalore, April 15: The Karnataka Government has proposed to establish a well-organised raw materials bank to assist small industries in the State.

The Minister of State for Small Industries, Mr. V. S. Koujalgi, told newsmen here to-day that the Government wanted to strengthen the raw materials position intended for small industries by stocking them. The proposal was expected to take the final step in a few months.

The minister said that Government had arranged for the supply of coke and coal to small industrial units in Bangalore which had been put to some difficulty because of the delay in supply.

Down on earth File photos of Theyyam artistes. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The gods among us

Bangalore International Centre in Domlur is organising 'The Gods Who Come Down from Heaven,' an illustrated lecture by Pepita Seth.

Pepita will discuss her decades-long study of Theyyam, the ritualistic performances of North Kerala, as presented in her new book *In God's Mirror: The Theyyams of Malabar*.

Theyyam, meaning 'god' is a ritual where deities are believed to descend into the bodies of practitioners. Adorned with intricate makeup and elaborate costumes, these embodied deities bless, heal, exorcise, and guide their devotees.

Pepita's lecture will explore the various deities portrayed, from powerful gods and goddesses to wronged women and animal spirits. There are even a few Muslim Theyyams, a testament to the form's cross-cultural nature.

The author's deep connection to the Theyyam community grants a rare insider's perspective. *In God's Mirror: The Theyyams of Malabar* is the culmination of her decades spent documenting and photographing this extraordinary tradition.

Pepita is an award-winning author and photographer who has spent the last 50 years documenting the hidden worlds of Kerala's sacred traditions.

Her dedication has been recognis

ed with the prestigious Padma Shri award from the Indian Government.

On April 17 at Bangalore Interntaional Centre. Free entry on a first come first served basis on RSVP and availability. For more information, visit bangaloreinternationalcentre.org.

'Music saved me'

The Karnataka-based, globally renowned musician, BC Manjunath discusses a diverse range of topics

Thrum along Mridangam artiste BC Manjunath. SUDHAKARA JAIN/ THE HINDU

Praveen Sudevan

Forget stuffy concert halls and maestros. There is something refreshing about Karnataka percussionist BC Manjunath, who lit up last month's Mahindra Percussion Festival. This dynamic artist and his infectious ensemble, Rhythms of India, infused the venue with a performance that blurred the lines between tradition and contemporary flair.

From Spanish-inflected rhythms to jaw-dropping *mridangam* solos, Manjunath kept the audience captivated.

How does Manjunath do it? It is not just about technical skill – there is a joyfulness radiating from him and his ensemble that draws you in. After his performance, we sat down with the artist to delve into his creative process, the power of collaboration, and the future of Indian music.

How did Rhythms of India come about?

Rhythms of India began during the pandemic. Teamwork Arts launched Art Matters, inviting artists to collaborate online. They asked me to assemble a team, and I connected with three talented musicians. We worked remotely, creating audio and video recordings. Teamwork Arts loved the collaboration and turned it into the Rhythms of India project.

You are all established artists who occasionally come together for Rhythms of India. Does that make it hard to find a groove quickly?

The amazing thing is everyone's an incredibly skilled musician with expertise in various areas. That really helps! Before rehearsals, we discuss ideas remotely, constantly bouncing things around on WhatsApp.

We even exchange individual pieces we've composed.

You might be surprised that we put together this entire performance (for the Mahindra Percussion Festival) in just four hours. We rehearse intensively, and even right before going on stage, we're constantly refining things. That's the beauty of this collaboration.

What is the best thing about working as a group?

Working solo can be fulfilling, but there is nothing quite like the energy that comes from collaborating. It's like a spark that jumps between us, this collective force that elevates the performance. We lift each other up - if someone's feeling down, the rest of the group is there to support them. I've been sick for two weeks, and honestly, I shouldn't have been performing (at the Mahindra Percussion Festival). But these three incredible artists - they had my back ultimately.

You come from a music family. But apart from the family influence, what drew you to music?

My father, BK Chandramouli, is one of the most respected *mridangam* artists in India. I'm the fifth generation of musicians in my family. Growing up, they instilled a strong practice discipline. However, as a teenager, I felt burnt out. My father, always incredibly supportive, suggested I take a break. But he asked me to listen to just one record. If it didn't inspire me, I could walk away. That record was a percussion ensemble by Karaikudi Mani. The first few beats reeled me in. It was one of the most transformative moments in my artistic life.

What would you have done if not for that moment?

(Laughs) I don't know. I was a teenager. I could have done better things or worse. Because it's an age where your hormones are uncontrollable. So, music saved me.

Despite being a popular artist, you have taught a lot as well. What drew you to teach?

My father's influence goes beyond just music. He was a busy performer with many students. By the time I was a teenager, he was overwhelmed and asked if I could start teaching some of his students – I was around 15 or 16 then.

Teaching came naturally, and it's been a constant in my life ever since. Initially, it was about passing on knowledge within my own culture. However, travel and teaching students from different backgrounds opened my eyes.

In India, students traditionally respect the teacher's authority with minimal questions. Elswhere, students actively question and engage, which was a massive shift. It forced me to delve deeper into the 'why' behind the music, not just the 'how. 'This not only made me a better teacher, but also a more humble one.

AI seems to be the buzzword across various domains. How do you see it affecting music?

I don't see AI ever fully replacing human musicians. Take cooking for example: a machine can create a flawless dish, but it can't replicate the love and soul poured into a meal by a family member. Music is the same.

AI can generate impressive sounds, but it lacks the ability to connect with the audience on an emotional level.

That kind of real-time emotional connection is what makes music so powerful. AI might be able to mimic human emotions someday, but for now, it's the human touch that breathes life into art.

Six years ago, you did an interesting musical experiment with the Fibonacci sequence. Can you elaborate?

My father introduced me to the Fibonacci series when I was seven or eight. I had forgotten it about it till a few years later when an Italian composer friend, Riccardo Nova, who was heavily influenced by the sequence, sparked something in me.

Around the same time, my father was very ill. I spent every night by his side and one morning, after a long night, I came home to see my son watching a documentary about Fibonacci on Discovery Channel.The image struck a chord; I felt compelled to compose a piece inspired by Fibonacci and share it with him.

'Look, Dad,' I said, filled with a sense of urgency, 'I have to compose something based on this.' He was exhausted that day and weakly requested to hear it the following day. But he passed away the next morning, never getting to listen to the piece.

I poured my emotions into a video accompaniment for the music. In a way, it felt like a tribute to him - a final connection through the very sequence he'd shown me years ago. The video unexpectedly went viral, and 'Fibonacci' became a huge success.

Do you think festivals like Mahindra Percussion Fest bring more listeners to Indian traditional music?

Tradition is not this frozen thing stuck in the past. It's more like a river - always moving, always changing. What's innovative today, if people love it enough and carry it forward, becomes tomorrow's tradition.

That's where the Mahindra Percussion Festival truly shines. They've nailed the marketing, and they curate an amazing mix. It's not just percussion bombardments. They blend in melodies, different musical styles - even show how Indian rhythms fit within other cultures. This makes it more relatable.

Classical music might not have instant singalongs, but it has its own deep rewards. Festivals like this help folks see what those rewards are and build that desire to explore.

Classical music is often seen as something for older people. Do you work actively to break these stereotypes?

Early on, social media became a creative outlet for me. There were ideas I couldn't express on stage, so I started experimenting online. And people loved the joy they saw in my posts. It's all about radiating enjoyment. On stage, the audience feeds off our collective energy, our smiles. It's contagious! And happiness, is totally infectious. That's what I'm after - creating music that sparks joy. It's not just about being happy and making music; it's about using music to make others happy. I think that's what resonates with people.

PFA on mission to slake thirst

Ruth Dhanaraj

The current heatwave sweeping the state is making life difficult for everyone, including animals. Bengaluru-based People for Animals (PFA) has relaunched Operation Quench Thirst to provide relief to wildlife.

"We had run a similar initiative in 2019 called Operation Quench Thirst-1 when water in the Thurahalli forest areas had dried up. We would take around four tankers there and replenish watering holes in the area," says Col Dr Nawaz Shariff, GM and Chief Veterinarian at the PFA Wildlife Hospital

"At that time, the spotted deer were leaving the forest in search of food and water; by doing so, they were in danger of being attacked by feral dogs or speeding vehicles. Since then, we have been in touch with the forest department to aid them if the situation arose. In the second week of March, they alerted us about the dip in in water levels and after our inspection we decided to pitch in with Operation Quench Thirst-2," he says.

The team had earlier placed receptacles for water in the forest, utilising cement rings used in wells, which were cemented at the bottom. This year, they added 10 more of these tubs to the existing eight in the forest, says Nawaz.

Elixir of life PFA's Operation Quench Thirst in action. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Since vehicles are not allowed in Thurahalli, the PFA team armed with written permission from the Forest Department, make trips to replenish water points there.

"Depending on the depletion of water inside we need anywhere between two and four tankers per trip," says Nawaz, adding that after filling up the tubs, trenches and watering holes, they empty the tankers into the lake.

Understandably, the scarcity of water that is plaguing wildlife has also resulted in a paucity of food as well. "Vegetation has dried up out of hunger, the animals are venturing out of the forest in search of food. We have an understanding with Big Basket – they give us their surplus vegetables and fruits which we chop into smaller portions and spread around the watering holes."

PFA is also in talks to source grass and other fodder they can place in Thurahalli. "We plan to keep this going till the rains start and after that, for a little while longer, till new shoots spring up in the forest. Since we are a charitable organisation and resources are scarce, we have asked well wishers to come forward with contributions in this season of drought."

Nawaz says according to the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru has only 7% of its green cover left. "People need to save 'their' wildlife or there will be none left in the future if they are not conserved now."

Thurahalli forest is home to spotted deer and wild boar as well as rare birds such as the flameback woodpecker, blue rock thrush and sirkeer cuckoo among other species of birds, animals and reptiles.

The boys are back in town The Tesseract band. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tesseract in city next week

Amarjot Kaur

If metal music is your cup of tea, then allow your soul to feed on it at a concert featuring the British progressive metal band, Tesseract, which will be touring India this month. The band, which comprises Acle Kahney, Jay Postones, James Monteith, Amos Williams and Daniel Tompkins, has belted out five albums, with their latest one titled *War of Being*.

"We wanted to get Tesseract to perform in India because they are quite popular and reached out to them. They have not staged a gig in India for quite some time, and we thought that it will be fascinating for metalheads to see them performing new songs from *War of Being*," says Amarjeet Singha, president of international artist bookings and IPs at SkillBox, which is an art community platform.

The band, formed in the early 2000s, created a buzz in 2022 with Regrowth, a special double a-side, to raise money for The Disasters Emergency Committee and help the Ukrainian people. On kscopemusic.bandcamp.com, the band had put up two songs for purchase – 'Hollow' and 'Rebirth' – that were slated to be mounted on their fifth album with a message: "These songs have been in the Tesseract domain for a while. We had developed them for album five, but they just weren't the right fit for where that album has headed. Rather than have them slowly decay on a server somewhere, we felt they could do something good, no matter how small?"

The nine-track album, *War of Being*, was released in September last year and has amassed rave reviews. *Metal Storm* stated that *War Of Being* is a strong return for Tesseract after a five-year gap, while blabbermouth.net addressed the album's eponymous track as the bravest record they have made to date.

The band, which first visited India in 2010 for the festival series Great Indian Rock, last visited the country in 2019, states *The Rolling Stone Magazine*.

"There is a sizeable population in India that is interested in metal music. As for tickets, we have sold almost 85% in Bengaluru and 70% in Delhi and Mumbai. With 20 days left, we are expecting sell-outs in each city," says Anmol Kukreja, founder and CEO of SkillBox.

Roydon Bangera, the platform's chief business officer, adds that they chose Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai for a few reasons. "All three cities have thriving metal scenes with a lot of passionate fans. They also consistently show strong interest in live music events, including metal gigs. This ensures a great audience for Tesseract and creates an exciting atmosphere for the shows," he justifies.

The band will be in Delhi's Imperfecto Patio on April 26 (8pm), Mumbai's Phoenix Marketcity on April 27 (7pm) and Bengaluru's GYLT on April 28 (8pm).

Tickets are priced upwards of ₹2,499; cover charges will be applicable on skillboxes.com

Fight is between ideologies of Congress and RSS, says Rahul

E.M. Manoj
KALPETTA

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has launched a scathing attack on the BJP and the RSS over 'their concept of one nation, one language, one leader, and one people.'

Addressing the public in Wayanad on Monday, Mr. Gandhi said the main fight in the election was between the ideologies of the RSS and the Congress.

Mr. Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders were nowadays vocal about one nation, one language, one leader, and one people and it stemmed from a wrong understanding of the country. "Language is not something that is imposed from the top. It comes from a person's heart," he said. To tell a person from Kerala that your language is inferior to Hindi, for example, is an insult to the people of Kerala, he said. "Malayalam is not just a language, it is your link to your civilisation," Mr. Gandhi said.

"The idea that India should have only one leader is an insult to every young Indian," Mr. Gandhi said, adding: "Why cannot a young boy or girl not be a leader, why cannot one of our brothers who is driving an autorickshaw or a police officers be a leader?"

"Why one leader? There should be millions of leaders in India," he added.

"We want to listen to our people. We want to love and respect their lives, their language, religion and culture. The BJP wants to impose something from the top," Mr. Gandhi said.

He said that India did not gain Independence from the British to be colonised by the ideology of the RSS. "We want India to be ruled by her people," he added.

Mr. Gandhi also highlighted the various unresolved issues of the district.

Will do everything possible to return the money of cheated investors: Modi

Narendra Modi during a public meeting ahead of Lok Sabha polls in Thiruvananthapuram. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who attended an election campaign of the National Democratic Alliance in Thrissur on Monday, promised to return the money seized by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the scam at the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank to the investors.

"The money of the poor people has been looted openly in Kerala. New models of corruption have been tried out here. The CPI(M) has looted the investors who deposited their hard-earned money, saved even for wedding purposes of their daughters. The CPI(M) has pushed thousands of poor people into misery. The Chief Minister has been lying for the last three years by promising to return the money," said Mr. Modi.

Money seized

"So far, the ED has seized ₹90 crore. I have been discussing with officials how to return this money to the victims of the scam. The BJP government has so far returned ₹17,000-crore scam money to investors in various States. I will do everything possible to return the money of Karuvannur investors," he said.

He said a "major leader" of the Congress who could not "save a family seat in Uttar Pradesh" has found shelter in Kerala. "But the Congress leader never uttered a word against the cooperative bank scam. For winning the election, the Congress has made a backdoor alliance with even a banned organisation," the Prime Minister said.

'LDF,UDF blocking development'

"The entire country is achieving rigorous development under the BJP rule. But the LDF and UDF are blocking the development in Kerala. They are taking the State backwards. Wherever the Left government is ruling, nothing will be left there. This happened in West Bengal and Tripura," said Mr. Modi.

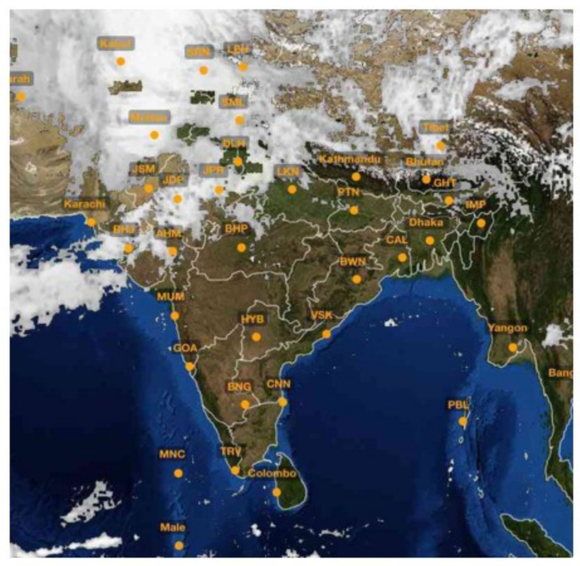
"Violence has become rampant in Kerala. Political murders are common. Tension prevails on campuses. People need to keep away from LDF and the UDF," he said. "Whatever development the country has witnessed in the last 10 years is just a trailer," he said.

"The BJP's manifesto is a manifesto for the development of the country. It has Modi's guarantee, he said.

Urging people to vote for the NDA candidates, Mr. Modi said "each vote you give to the NDA will be for the support of poor people."

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura. Hot and humid weather likely to prevail over Odisha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	37.3	25.7	Kozhikode	—	38.0	28.5
Ahmedabad	—	40.0	26.5	Kurnool	—	41.0	26.4
Aizawl	—	27.0	19.2	Lucknow	—	39.0	24.6
Allahabad	—	41.0	24.6	Madurai	—	37.0	26.0
Bengaluru	—	35.9	22.0	Mangaluru	—	35.2	26.9
Bhopal	—	37.0	22.8	Mumbai	—	39.0	25.6
Bhubaneswar	—	41.2	25.1	Mysuru	—	37.4	21.0
Chandigarh	0.4	33.2	21.2	New Delhi	—	35.2	21.6
Chennai	—	35.0	27.0	Patna	—	37.9	26.1
Coimbatore	—	37.0	24.4	Port Blair	—	34.6	27.0
Dehradun	0.5	30.0	21.2	Puducherry	—	35.0	25.9
Gangtok	5	23.4	12.8	Pune	—	40.7	24.4
Goa	—	35.0	25.0	Raipur	—	39.0	25.5
Guwahati	—	36.0	22.0	Ranchi	—	36.0	22.9
Hubballi	—	38.0	23.0	Shillong	26	26.0	11.4
Hyderabad	—	39.1	26.5	Shimla	—	24.0	16.4
Imphal	—	32.0	15.5	Srinagar	28	12.0	8.0
Jaipur	—	35.0	26.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.0	26.5
Kochi	—	33.0	28.2	Tiruchi	—	38.0	26.6
Kohima	—	26.0	13.6	Vijayawada	—	39.0	25.8
Kolkata	—	39.0	27.6	Visakhapatnam	—	36.0	27.7

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	17	38	124	100	
Bengaluru	10	17	24	94	102	
Chennai	8	9	81	69	70	
Delhi	11	59	65	256	276	
Hyderabad	3	33	49	65	132	
Kolkata	20	8	77	79	96	
Lucknow	5	60	25	136	167	
Mumbai	—	132	54	48	80	
Pune	25	2	74	89	136	
Visakhapatnam	11	45	34	79	108	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 308 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 36

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

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• Enclose related documents.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, Sri. Sandeep Son of Sri.S.N.Shreenivasa Shetty is the absolute owner of the property described in the Schedule hereunder.

It is brought to the notice of the general public that, our client has negotiated and decided to purchase the Schedule Property from the above said owners. All persons having any claims against to the Schedule Property or any part thereof by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, conveyance, MOU, Agreement to Sell, Joint Development Agreement, G.P.A, transfer, lease deed, tenancy, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, exchange, possession, adverse possession or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to submit the same in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at their office **within 15 days from the date of publication hereof,** failing which our client shall proceed without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, will be considered as waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that Piece and parcel of the land bearing **Sy. No. 139/2** measuring to an extent of 4 Acres 30 Guntas situated at **Mallur Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mallur Taluk, Kolar District and bounded on : East by :** Property belongs to Venkatadri (Chennamma); **West by :** Sy.No 140/1; Jayamma's Land; **North by:** Railway Track; **South by :** Property belongs to Srinivas and Jayachandrareddy;

Dated this 16 day of April 2024 at Bangalore

M/S. LEGAL NEXUS
ADVOCATES & CONSULTANTS
No. 428, First Floor, 25th Cross, 24th Main
Sector 2, HSR Layout, Bangalore – 560 102
Phone: 080-65555914
Mobile: 9945688974; 9164150690

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that our Client intends to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property from **Mrs. DEEPA KURIEN** aged about 59 years wife of Mr. Pramod Kurien residing at 102, Prestige Andree 11 and 11/1, Andree Road, Next to Yellamma Dasappa Hospital, Shanti Nagar, Wilson Garden, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru Urban - 560027 **("Owner").**

The Owner has represented that she is the absolute owner in absolute possession and enjoyment of the Schedule Property and the Schedule Property is free from any kind of encumbrances, suits, proceedings under any statute. Any person or persons asserting any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, gift, inheritance, bequest, possession, lis pendens, maintenance, easement, memorandum of understanding, agreement, power of attorney, option, right of first refusal, pre-emption or otherwise whatsoever is hereby required to notify the same in writing to the undersigned within a period of **Seven (7) days** from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof thereof failing which our Client will treat the title of the Schedule Property as clear, absolute and marketable and will proceed to enter into the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Residential Apartment bearing No. S-07, measuring 2100 sq. ft., of super built up area in the Second Floor in the Building known as "GOLDEN ARCHID" having BBMP PID No. 76-28-10/8-48 together with one covered car parking space in the basement having car park No. S-07, along with 832.63 sq. ft., of undivided share, right, title and interest over the earlier Municipal Corporation bearing No. 10/8, earlier Corporation Division No. 61, situated at Kasturaba Road, Bengaluru Urban District – 560001, and currently the property is within the limits of BBMP Ward No. 111 – Shanthala Nagar, Bengaluru and compositely bounded as follows:-

East by : Hotel Rama;
West by : Kivraj Mansion and Private Road leading to Kasturaba Road;
North by : Premises No. 10/6; and
South by : Lavelle Road Cross leading to Casa Lavelle.

Mr. Sadananda P N
For Sadananda & Co.
No. 54/1, off 8th Cross,
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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE XVI ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-12)
O.S. No. 5603/2023
Hg. 28/05/2024

Between :
M/s. ICICI Bank Limited having its registered office at : Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390007, and branch office at: 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru- 560068, through its authorised representative
Mr. Harish E. **...Plaintiff**
And :
Sri. Hanumanthaiah G
...Defendant

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC

Defendant:
Hanumanthaiah G
S/o. Gopalaiah T
Aged about 49 years
R/at : 102, Surabhinagar East, Jambusavari dinne, JP Nagar, 8th phase, 2nd Cross, Near BK Circle, Bangalore-560076.
PAN No. ACLPH6564P
Ph: 9739442282/ 9742046942.
Office address at : Employee ID: 9154 Ratnagiri Impex Pvt Ltd, Annapoorna House, 1/1G, 7th Cross, New Guddadahalli, Mysore Road, Near Giriyas Showroom, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560026.
Hanoococoon2@gmail.com

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 4,45,068.52/-** along with interest at the rate of 24% P.A. against you, and you are summoned to appear before the XVI Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H.-12), in person or by a pleader, on the day of **28/05/2024** at **11:00 AM** to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 2nd day of April, 2024 at Bangalore.

By order of the Court
Ass. Hon'ble
City Civil Court
Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhil Partners,
Advocates
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A', 3, Queen's Road, Bengaluru-01.

PERSONAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

I, JC 338742H Sub Alok Mishra serving in ADMC, MS Nagar, Bangalore-560033, hereby declare that My mother correct Name is Sita Bai Mishra and not Sita Mishra and her actual date of birth is 01-01-1953 and not 03-02-1950 vide affidavit Dated 13-04-2024, before Notary Uday Kumar K. Bangalore-560024

I, JC 342663L Sub Munshi Lutfar Rahaman serving in ADMC, MS Nagar, Bangalore-560033, Hereby declare that My mother correct Name is Fajilatunnesa Bewa and not Fojilatun Nessa and her actual date of birth is 15-06-1945 and not 01-07-1946 vide affidavit Dated 13-04-2024, before Notary Uday Kumar K. Bangalore-560024

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF 73rd ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-74)
O.S. No. 26100/2023

BETWEEN :
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Mansi Singh
D/o. Mr. Anil Kumar Singh
Aged about 24 years,
fxcol@yahoo.co.in
Phone No. 8041216669.
...PLAINTIFF

AND :
Mr. Jaskaran Singh Balhotra S/o. Jagdip Singh Balhotra,
Aged about 30 years,
No. 501, 24th Cross,
Ejipura, Nr. Muneshwara Temple, Muneshwara Layout BANGALORE- 560 047.
...DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 5,47,095.44/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Forty Seven Thousand and Hundred Ninety Five and Paisa Forty Five Only)** apart from future interest of 24% p.a. in **O.S. No. 25404/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 74**. Before Addl. City Civil Court, MayoHall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **01st day of June, 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence. Exparte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **01st day of April, 2024**

By order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & CO.,
ADVOCATES,
New No. 9, Old No.11/1
Gaver Road, Cox Town,
Bengaluru- 560 001

PERSONAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

I, JC 341336N Sub Uttam Kumar Mishra serving in ADMC, MS Nagar, Bangalore-560033, Hereby declare that My mother correct Name is Shyama Mishra and not Shyama Devi and her actual date of birth is 01-01-1955 and not 15-10-1958 vide affidavit Dated 13-04-2024, before Notary Uday Kumar K. Bangalore-560024

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ANITA, D/o Mr. Sant Bahadur and Mrs. Mamta and W/o Sibgathulla Baig, R/a No.16, Bowee Lane, A Street, Near Garuda Mall, Ashok Nagar, Bengaluru-560025 have changed my name to Arnaz vide affidavit dt: 15.04.2024 sworn before Notary C.V.Earappa, B'lore

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-21)
O.S. No. 25171/2023

BETWEEN :
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Mansi Singh
D/o. Mr. Anil Kumar Singh
Aged about 24 years,
fxcol@yahoo.co.in
Phone No. 8041216669.
...PLAINTIFF

AND:
Mrs. Geethanjali L
D/o Lokeshappa,
Aged about 33 years, 269, Heritage Country, Sarjapura, Bangalore, Bangalore- 562 125 **...DEFENDANT**

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 5,38,975.19/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Thirty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Five and Paisa Ninety Only)** apart from future interest of 9.80% p.a. in **O.S. No. 25404/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 21,** Before Addl. City Civil Court, MayoHall, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **04th day of July, 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **05th day of April, 2024.**

By order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & CO.,
Advocates,
New No. 9, Old No. 11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
Bengaluru- 560 001

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, UMA Nagarajan R, M/o Neethipathy N, R/at 610/B kr garden, Murugespalya B'lore-17 have changed my name to N Uma vide affidavit dt. 12-04-24 before A.R. Muneer Ahmed B'lore

I, SALEEM, S/o Manzurul Haque, R/at No.1116/1, 2nd Floor, 26th B Main Road, 41st Cross, Jayanagar 9th Block, Bangalore-560041 have changed my name from Saleem to Md Salim vide affidavit dated 15-04-24 before Notary K.V.Mani, Bengaluru.

I, DEREK Browne, S/o Denis Joseph Browne, R/a #58/1, 1st Cross Road, Vivekananda Nagar, Maruthi Seva Nagar, Bengaluru-560033 have changed my name to Derek Adrian Browne vide affidavit dt: 15.04.2024 sworn before Notary Gangaraju.B.N, B'lore

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE XXIX ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-30)
O.S. No. 5669/2023
Hg. 24/06/2024

Between :
M/s. ICICI Bank Limited, having its registered office at : Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390 007 and branch office at : 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru- 560 068. through its authorised representative Mr. Harish E.
...Plaintiff

AND :
Mr. Raghunath Balaji
...Defendant

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC

To,
Defendant :
Mr. Raghunath Balaji,
Sole proprietorship of GRB Enterprises,
S/o. Raghunath,
Aged about 39 years,
R/at. 1169, 1st Floor, 28th A Cross, Mcechs Layout, Dr. Shivaramakarath Nagar, Bangalore- 560 077
PAN No.- AQQPB1514N
Phone No.- 9886280030

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 13,56,344/-** along with interest at the rate of 24% P.A. against you, and you are summoned to appear before the XXIX Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H.30), in person or by a pleader, on the day of **24/06/2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the **30th** day of **March, 2024.**

By the order of court
Assistant Registrar,
Hon'ble City Civil Court,
Bengaluru

Advocates for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhii Partners, Advocates,
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A', 3, Queens Road, Bengaluru-01

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, M.DHANA Lakshmi W/o Neethipathy N R/at 610/B kr garden, Murugespalya Bangalore-17 have changed my name to Dhanalakshmi vide affidavit dt 12-Apr-2024 before A.R.Muneer Ahmed B'lore

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 57th ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BENGALURU (CCH-58)
ORIGINAL SUIT NO. 25449 OF 2023
Hg. 28/05/2024

BETWEEN :
ICICI Bank Ltd,
A body corporate incorporated and registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 and licensed as a Bank under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 having Registered Office at: "Landmark", Race Course Circle, Vadodara - 390007
And having its Regional office at ICICI Bank Ltd., 11th Floor, C-Wing, Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bengaluru- 560 001.
And represented by its POA Holder, Miss. Mansi Singh, D/o Anil Kumar Singh.
Age: 24 years. **...PLAINTIFF**

AND:
1) Mr. UPPARA KESHAVA
2) Mrs. SOWJANYA
..DEFENDANT

Summons/Notice through Paper Publication

1) Mr. UPPARA KESHAVA,
Aged about 37 years,
Son of Hari Uppara,
R/a 507, 4th Floor, Uppara Hari Arine, Amaryllis, Near DLF New Town, Akshya Nagara, Bengaluru- 560 068.
2) Mrs. SOWJANYA,
Aged about 37 years,
Son of Hari Uppara,
R/a #507, 4th Floor, Uppara Hari Arine, Amaryllis, Near DLF New Town, Akshya Nagara, Bengaluru- 560 068.
...DEFENDANT NO.1 & 2

WHEREAS the above named Plaintiff has instituted case against you for recovery loan amount **Rs.15,17,702/-** together with interest at the rate 18% p.a. from date of due to till the date of realization.

You are hereby summoned to appear before this Hon'ble 57th Addl. City Civil and Session Judge Court, Mayo Hall (CCH-58) at Bengaluru, in person or by a advocate/pleader on **28/05/2024** at **11:00 AM** to answer the questions of the same. Failing which the matter will be heard and determined as **"EX-PARTE"**

Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this 21st day of March, 2024.

By the order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court Mayo hall
Unit Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
K.N. ARVINDA NAVADA
M/s. ELITE LEGAL INC,
Advocates, 425/1/21-2,
1st Floor, 4th Cross,
BTS Main Road, Wilson Garden, Bengaluru- 560 027

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL JUDGE AT BANGALORE (CCH-03)
ORIGINAL SUIT NO. 1095 OF 2022

BETWEEN :
ICICI Bank Ltd.,
a body corporate incorporated and registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 and licensed as a Bank under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 having Registered Office at : "Landmark", Race Course Circle, Vadodara-390007. And having its Branch office at ICICI Bank Ltd., 4/10, 1st Floor Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Road, Bangalore- 560 068
And represented by its POA Holder and Collection Manager Mr. Rohith Ali M. S/o Ishrath Ali M., Age: 25 Years **...PLAINTIFF**

AND :
Mr. Deelip K. **...DEFENDANT**

Notice/ Summons to Defendands

To,
Defendant :
Mr. Deelip K., aged about 32 years, Son of Kashinath Mane, R/at Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd., 8th Main Road Kanchaghatta Badavane, Near Govt. School, Tumkur- 572 201

Whereas the Plaintiff above named has filed a suit under Order VII Rule 1 of the Civil Procedure Code for recovery of **Rs.8,49,985/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Forty Nine Thousand and Nine Hundred Eighty Five Only)** as on 23.11.2021 together with interest at the rate 18% p.a. from date of due to the date of realization. You are hereby summoned to appear before this Hon'ble Court, in person or by a pleader on 31/05/2024 at 11:00 am to show cause against the suit, and failing wherein the suit will be heard and determined exparte.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court this **29th day of February, 2024**

By order of the Court
Asst. Registran
City Civil Court

Advocates for plaintiff :
S.M. Anees Ahamed,
B.M. Kushalappa,
Advocate,
No. 4, (10/2), West Park Road Kumara Park East, Bangalore- 560 001

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 57th ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BENGALURU (CCH-58)
ORIGINAL SUIT NO. 25423 OF 2022
Hg. 31/05/2024

BETWEEN :
ICICI Bank Ltd.,
A body corporate incorporated and registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 and licensed as a Bank under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 having Registered Office at : "Landmark", Race Course Circle, Vadodara - 390007
And having its Regional office at : ICICI Bank Ltd., 11th Floor, C-Wing, Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. And represented by its POA Holder,
Mr. Pramodh G,
S/o. Gurumalappa.
Age: 46 years. **...PLAINTIFF**

AND:
Mrs. SHRUTHI H. M.
...DEFENDANT

Summons/Notice through Paper Publication

Defendant
Mrs. Shruthi H.M.
Aged about 31 years,
D/o Manje Gowda Chikki Gowda, R/at No.58/172A, 7th Cross, West of Chord Road, 1st Stage, 5th Phase, Bengaluru- 560 044.
...DEFENDANT

WHEREAS the above named Plaintiff has instituted case against you for recovery loan amount **Rs.5,68,683/-** together with interest at the rate 24% p.a. from date of due to till the date of realization.

You are hereby summoned to appear before this Hon'ble 57th Addl. City Civil & Session Judge, Mayo Hall, (CCH-58), at Bengaluru, Court in person or by a Advocate/Pleader on. **31/05/2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer the questions of the same. Failing which the matter will be heard and determined as **"EX-PARTE".**

Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this 25th day of March, 2024.

By the order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court Mayo Hall
Unit Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
Mr. K.N. Arvinda Navada
Advocate
No.177/1, (88), 1st Floor, Besides 12th Cross, Cubbonpet Main Road, Bengaluru-560 002.

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Pitch for continuity

BJP manifesto is as focused on achievements as on promises

In its manifesto for the 2024 general election, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought a popular mandate for a third consecutive term under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The party's campaign is based primarily on its track record of the previous two terms. It has underscored its achievements in terms of the advancement of a core ideological agenda and governance promises, while making the case for a third term. The special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 was undone, and the Ram temple in Ayodhya was inaugurated during the second term of Mr. Modi. A third component of the core programme of the BJP, namely, implementation of a Uniform Civil Code, has been promised in the third term. The manifesto has a catalogue of measures already implemented by the BJP, which include the ongoing free grain scheme that covers two-thirds of the population, piped drinking water, and other anti-poverty programmes, particularly in housing. The manifesto claims that 25 crore people have been lifted out of poverty during the last two terms of governance. Criminalisation of triple talaq is also cited as an achievement. The manifesto cites the expanded representation of Other Backward Classes, tribal communities and Dalits in government – 60% of the outgoing Council of Ministers, according to the manifesto – as proof of the commitment to social justice.

In its pitch for a third term, the BJP argues that continuity of a strong, stable government is essential in steering the country through a period of global instability. It also promises the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the law for women's reservations in the third term. The party steers clear of any view regarding the demand for a caste census – which is a promise in the Congress manifesto – but makes a mention of the 10% reservation that it implemented for the Economically Weaker Sections. The key new promise that it makes for a third term is a health-care guarantee worth up to ₹5 lakh for senior citizens. In a notable departure, there is no reference in the manifesto for a National Register of Citizens, a contentious topic. Apart from the emphasis on Mr. Modi's personal appeal – the entire manifesto is titled 'Modi's Guarantee' – the BJP is making an appeal to the Gramin, Yuva, Annadata, Nari and Middle Class (GYANM) segment, which refers to rural areas, youth, farmers, women and the new middle class. The manifesto documents the BJP's strategy and vision which indicates continuity in the trajectory of India set during the last 10 years. After two terms, the BJP had to necessarily recount its welfare schemes and other achievements, but as a party in power, its promises should have been more substantive. The voters will necessarily weigh the promises in the backdrop of the achievements.

Two-horse race

Karnataka is seeing a straight contest between BJP and Congress

Almost a year since the Siddaramaiah-led Congress rode to power in Karnataka with a thumping majority of 136 seats out of 224 in the State Legislature, the party is banking on the widespread appreciation for implementing its 'five guarantees' that it had promised in order to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Janata Dal (Secular) (JDS) alliance in the general election. While the polls to the Lok Sabha are in the backdrop of the Rameshwaram Cafe blast in Bengaluru on March 1, that left nine people injured, the incident has had little impact on the ground, with even the BJP, which has alleged that it is a case of a 'law and order' failure, treading carefully to avoid giving it communal undertones. It is a difficult lesson the BJP is likely to have learnt from its performance in the Assembly elections on May 10, 2023. Its governance was marked by months of communally polarising government orders and issues, beginning with the hijab ban in February 2022 soon after Basavaraj Bommai replaced the hugely popular party veteran B.S. Yediyurappa as Chief Minister. This was followed by the repeal of the 4% reservations for Muslims in State government jobs and educational institutions, and distributing this quota equally between Vokkaligas and Veerashaiva-Lingayats. The repeal, in the form of a government order on March 27, came weeks before the Assembly elections in May. Yet, the Congress bettered its 2018 Assembly poll performance by four percentage points, garnering an impressive 43% vote share, while there was no change in the BJP's vote share of 36%.

The Congress's 'five guarantees' have resulted in tangible benefits for more than two-thirds of the State's population, going by government claims. But the party's attempt to make the 'denial of Karnataka's central pool of funds' a poll issue has had little resonance. The BJP has witnessed steady success in the Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka, bettering its 2014 record of 43% by 8.4 percentage points in the 2019 general election, crossing the half-way mark at 51.4%, and winning 25 of the 28 seats. With the JD(S) steadily losing ground and vote share and being viewed as representing only one community, the Vokkaligas, it has been relegated to being allotted three seats in the BJP-led alliance. This general election would thus be a direct contest between the BJP and the Congress. But it appears unlikely that the BJP, now the principal Opposition in the State, will be able to replicate its performance in 2019.

Guarantee is precarity, welfare is self-care

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) years are often, in mainstream media, lauded as years with a generous welfare agenda. But do budgetary allocations in the Union Budget corroborate this assessment?

We try to answer this by looking at the trend in welfare spending over the past 20 years. We compare expenditure on what we label "NDA schemes" with United Progressive Alliance (UPA) or "UPA schemes".

Reetika Khera

is a Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

Md. Asjad

studies economics at the Jamia Millia Islamia

Contrasting models?

For the UPA decade (2004-2014), we include five major programmes as "UPA schemes". These are the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 and four schemes of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013: the Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid-Day Meals (MDM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and maternity entitlements (provided through the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) that operationalised very belatedly in 2017).

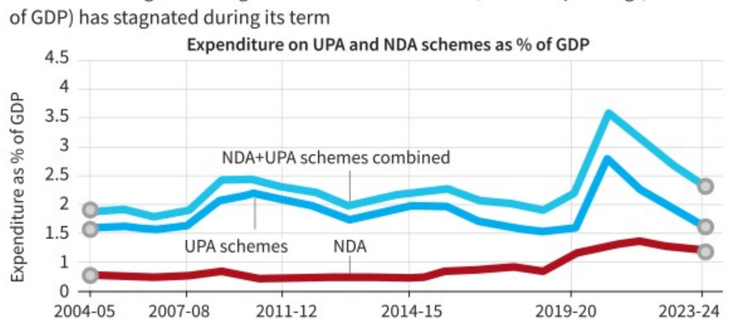
For the PDS, we use the food subsidy. Apportioning the food subsidy into a consumer-, producer- (i.e., the farmer's share, who sells wheat and rice at minimum support prices) subsidy and administrative costs is not straightforward. However, halving the food subsidy (as an approximation of the consumer subsidy) does not make much of a difference.

During the NDA period (2014-2024), the Bharatiya Janata Party funded the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) from 2014, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) from 2015 and PM-Awas (rural) the following year along with Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. The PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) and Ayushman Bharat were initiated in 2018, while the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was in 2019. The total budget for Ayushman Bharat from 2019-24 was ₹32,000 crore, i.e., half the annual expenditure on PM-Awas, averaged over the same period. Including it does not change the broad results, which is why we exclude it.

> The NDA government has managed to project itself as a big welfare spender by renaming pre-existing UPA programmes but has been underfunding them without any compensatory social assistance of its own

The state of welfare

Notwithstanding the Modi government's shrill rhetoric, welfare spending (as % of GDP) has stagnated during its term



"UPA" includes food subsidy, MGNREGA, Mid-Day Meals, ICDS and PM-Matru Vandana Yojana. "NDA" includes Swachh Bharat Mission, PM-Awas, PM-Kisan, Jal Jeevan Mission and LPG subsidy. Sources: Union Budget, various years. When actuals were unavailable, Revised Estimate (RE) is used. Where RE is not available, Budget Estimate (BE) is used.

For Ujjwala Yojana we use the LPG subsidy (as with the food subsidy), though only a small part of it is spent on Ujjwala Yojana. The *chart* includes five major "NDA schemes": SBA, PM-Awas, LPG subsidy, PM-Kisan and the JJM.

Some have contrasted the UPA with the NDA, where private goods (toilets, LPG cylinder and water connections, housing) are provided by the government, and have labelled this "new welfarism". However, several of these schemes existed in the UPA years, with different names (Swachh Bharat was Nirmal Bharat, PM-Awas was Indira Awaas, and so on) and lower budgets. After 2014, the UPA schemes continue with new names (e.g., MDM is Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman, or PM POSHAN, and the PDS is Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, or PMGKAY).

The NDA schemes follow a saturation approach that allows an element of 'self-targeting'. Only those who do not have a toilet or 'pucca' room or LPG connection, are eligible. Once they receive it, others get a chance. In the case of the UPA's benefits, entitled people get benefits enshrined in the laws on a yearly (100 days of work for rural families), monthly (PDS grains) or daily (meals in schools and at anganwadis) basis. Here too, there is some self-targeting – only those who cannot get work at higher wages than NREGA show up for it and children in government schools and angwandis tend to be from poorer families.

On how welfare spending has changed

Let us, nevertheless, keep the distinction for now. The *chart* shows expenditure in the Union Budget on "NDA schemes", "UPA schemes" and the combined total. The level of welfare expenditure (top line) is low and stagnating, in spite of good GDP growth in this period. It exceeds 3% of GDP only once (in one of the two COVID-19 years). Whatever increase there is, was during the UPA years. After the Fourteenth Finance Commission devolved more funds to the States; the Centre's share was reduced to 60% from 90% for some schemes. Adjusting for this, the point still stands.

In contrast to the NDA schemes, none of which are legal entitlements, the UPA benefits are enshrined in the law. So, it is not easy to defund them entirely. The NDA schemes, therefore, are much more like 'freebies' dependant on the whims of the government. Legal compulsions notwithstanding, the UPA schemes, especially those for children (school meals and the ICDS) suffered budgetary neglect under the NDA (middle line). Their share declined gradually from around 1.5% of GDP in 2014 to 1% of GDP in 2018-19. Then, the pandemic forced the government to ramp it up.

Increased funding to NDA schemes barely offsets the decline in spending on UPA schemes. It rose steadily (bottom line) in the past decade but remained below 1% of GDP. This explains their modest achievements: according to the National Family Health Survey, LPG usage increased from 43% in 2015-16 to 58% in 2019-21 (the most recent year for which the data is available). The proportion of households practising open defecation has halved (from 39% to 19%) and those residing in 'pucca' homes barely changed (from 56% to 60%).

It is precisely because the NDA lacked imagination that during COVID-19, it fell back on UPA initiatives, including NREGA which was mocked in 2015 by the Prime Minister as a symbol of the Congress's failures.

The NDA's fraught relationship with UPA schemes is evident in the case of the PDS/PMGKAY too. The NFSA 2013 mandated 50% coverage in urban areas and 75% in rural areas (i.e., 800 million in all), providing five kilograms a person a month at ₹2-₹3 a kg (for wheat and rice, respectively) for those covered by the PDS.

From April 2020 to December 2022, the government doubled people's entitlements (from five kilograms each month to 10 kg, providing the extra five kilograms free) as COVID-19 relief. When the COVID-19 top up was discontinued in 2023, to blunt the blow, the original NFSA entitlement (five kilograms for ₹10-₹15) was made free. This repackaged PDS, that saved each person an additional ₹15 a month at most, was renamed PMGKAY.

Facts aside, the current expanded coverage of 800 million through the PDS that a UPA legislation (the NFSA 2013) enabled, is now associated much more with the BJP than the Congress. This is astonishing because the NDA's failure to conduct the 2021 Census has excluded millions from the PDS. Estimates based on population projections show that applying NFSA mandated coverage ratios (50% in urban and 75% in rural areas) to the 2021 population would have added more than 100 million to the PDS.

State initiatives

The silver lining is that several State governments, especially those ruled by regional parties, have stepped up to the plate. For instance, while the Union government has barely increased per child cooking costs for school meals, even poorer States such as Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha provide for eggs a few times a week in the MDM and ICDS.

Similarly, the central contribution to some social security pensions (for the elderly, widows) has stagnated at ₹200 per month since 2006. Meanwhile, most States provide a top up and several have increased coverage. Odisha's Madhu Babu Pension Yojana supports 58% of pensioners in the State. Odisha and Tamil Nadu provide higher amounts (₹10,000 and ₹18,000, respectively) as maternity entitlements to pregnant women than the Centre's PMMVY (₹5,000-₹6,000).

The NDA government has managed to build a reputation as a big welfare spender by renaming pre-existing programmes (MDM/POSHAN, PDS/PMGKAY), while underfunding them without any compensatory social assistance of its own. In an Orwellian world, "war is peace", "freedom is slavery", so under the NDA's, "guarantee is precarity" and "welfare is self-care".

New data law, a barrier to journalistic free speech

In August 2023, India got its first comprehensive data protection law, the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023. The government is in the process of framing rules and regulations to operationalise the law and the process is expected to be done after the general election. The law is largely based on users giving consent for the processing of their personal data. It provides basic rights such as access to and erasure of data, places some obligations on companies, and establishes a complaints body for grievance redress. However, the law might have an invisible impact on journalistic free speech.

Typically, data protection laws exempt journalistic activities from privacy obligations such as notifying users and taking their consent before using their personal data. Three previous drafts of the DPDP Act had exemptions for journalistic activities, but the final law withdrew such an exemption. The Editors Guild of India also pointed to this risk and in a letter to the government, requested that journalistic activities be exempted from the DPDP Act.

Shashank Mohan

is Programme Manager at the Centre for Communication Governance, National Law University Delhi

An impediment

Now you may ask, what does privacy have to do with journalistic free speech? Imagine that you are a journalist writing about a Member of Parliament (MP) and his performance. For your story, you use information from their lives such as the meetings they held, where, and with whom, the towns, villages, and cities they travelled to. How often did they use a private jet or a chartered plane? What about their financial background and also the investments made by their close family members? Most of this information is not available in the public domain and needs a lot of research. All this information about an MP is their 'personal data', which is data protected under the DPDP Act. Consequently, any journalist who wishes to use this data will have to get their consent before publishing the story. Even after publication, the MP can exercise their right to erasure and request journalists to delete such stories.

> In the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, the removal of 'journalistic exemption' highlights the need for more robust public consultation

Further, the DPDP Act empowers the government to call for information from any data processor in India. Depending on how this provision is interpreted and applied, this may impact the confidentiality that journalists must maintain for their sources and research documents. Taken together, this need for journalists to get consent before publishing their story, the potential for the subject to rely on the right to erasure to have the story deleted, and the power of the government to call for information would likely impede a journalist's ability to discharge their role as the fourth estate – of holding the state accountable.

If this is a well-identified challenge, then why did the government remove such an exemption from subsequent drafts? This remains unclear. Three previous drafts of the DPDP Act, one released by an expert committee on data protection (2018), the other by the government (2019), and the third released by a Joint Parliamentary Committee in 2021, contained clear exemptions for journalistic activities. In two subsequent drafts of the DPDP Act (2022 and 2023), the exemption given to journalistic activities was withdrawn without reasons being given.

No clarification

This instance of the end stage removal of the clause for journalistic exemption points to the need for adopting a more robust and transparent public consultation process around proposed laws. One of the primary ways to get feedback on a law is to institute an 'open and transparent' public consultation model. Although the Indian government released three separate drafts of the data protection law for public consultation, none of the comments received on the drafts has ever been released in the public domain. This impedes the ability of citizens to understand what different stakeholders were saying and who was finally heard in the final formulation of the law. The government has also conducted invite-only town halls to gather feedback on drafts of the DPDP Act.

The withdrawal of exemptions for journalistic activities was not discussed in such town halls. And, no clarification was provided by the government for its withdrawal. Unfortunately, these consultations and town halls are often not conducive to enable open debate and deliberation on the proposed law and its provisions.

An appeal

Legally then, what are the solutions we can envision? In addition to enabling an open and transparent consultation process, the government can swiftly remedy this problem via rules under the DPDP Act. Under the Act, the central government has the power to exempt any data processor or 'classes' of data processors from any provisions of the law. These give wide powers to the government to single-handedly provide and take away an exemption – but it is the quickest route available in this case. Although an exemption for journalistic work should form part of the core text of the law, the government must use this rule to exempt journalistic entities, including citizen journalists, from any obligations under the DPDP Act. This will ensure that the DPDP Act does not have negative consequences on journalistic free speech in India.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Think and vote

General election 2024 has a deeper implication due to the Bharatiya Janata Party's socio-politico agenda. It looks like it is another war of independence because of the divisive and hate politics of the BJP, which is dangerous for the unity and integrity of the nation. Democratic values are in great danger. Secularism is fading fast. One government at the Centre with no rights for the States will hamper the growth and development of States. On the one hand, the BJP buys off its opponents, failing which cases are filed against them. Instrumentalities of the government such as the ED and CBI are used towards party ends. On the other hand, the BJP has successfully weaponised Hindutva for electoral gains. The reality is that Hindutva is being used as a smoke screen to hide the crony capitalist policies of the BJP. The real issues facing the nation are unemployment, inflation, poverty, wealth and income inequality, religious polarisation, caste discrimination among others which can never be tackled with the BJP's agenda.

It is imperative that people mobilise themselves to think and act not merely in terms of their perception of one leader but on the basis of which leader will be able to meet the aspirations of the people while uniting the country as a whole. Else, we would be fast heading to one man rule, and not a constitutional form of governance.

N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

'Ageless Dhoni'

Julius Caesar came, he saw and he conquered Pharnaces II.
M.S. Dhoni came, he saw and he conquered Wankhade against Mumbai Indians with his swashbuckling four-ball 20 runs laced with a hat-trick of sixes. And, CSK won by 20 runs ('Sport' page, April 15).

K. Pradeep,
Chennai

India's Arctic imperative

Abhijit Singh
is head of the Maritime Policy Initiative at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

Andreas Østhagen
is a Senior Research Fellow at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo

In December 2023, when four Indian climate scientists arrived in Oslo to begin acclimatisation for India's maiden winter expedition at the Arctic, they had little idea of what lay ahead. Himadri, India's research station in the International Arctic Research Base at Svalbard in Norway, had until then hosted missions only in the summer. A winter expedition entails living in the intense cold (as low as -15 degrees Celsius) after a period of rigorous acclimatisation. More concerning for Indian researchers was the daunting prospect of polar nights.

Growing interest in the Arctic

In March 2024, India's first winter experience at the Arctic came to a successful end. While the scientists will doubtless be proud of their feat, India's long reluctance to embark on an all-year Arctic mission calls for introspection. For over a decade, India's National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research saw no reason for a winter mission to the Arctic. What changed Indian policy, ostensibly, was scientific data showing that the Arctic was warming faster than previously thought. When facts tying catastrophic climatic occurrences in India to the melting of Arctic Sea ice emerged, decision-makers felt compelled to act.

Second, New Delhi is seized of the opening up of Arctic Sea routes, primarily the Northern Sea Route, and would like to route Indian trade through the region. This might help India reduce costs for shipping companies along with time, fuel, and security costs for transmitting goods.

The third reason is geopolitics. China's growing investments in the Arctic have raised concern in India. Russia's decision to grant China expanded access to the Northern Sea Route has deepened this anxiety. India's increasing focus on the Arctic comes at a time of heightened tensions in the region, fuelled by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and exacerbated by the suspension of various regional cooperative forums. There are concerns about the potential repercussions of these tensions, especially given Russia's growing reliance on its nuclear deterrent on the Kola Peninsula. For India, which aims to maintain constructive relations with both western nations and Russia, these developments carry significant strategic implications.

To be sure, India is no newcomer to the Arctic. Its involvement in the region goes back to 1920, with the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in Paris. In 2007, India undertook its first research mission to investigate Arctic microbiology, atmospheric sciences, and geology. A year later, India became the only developing country, aside from China, to establish an Arctic research base. After being granted 'observer' status by the Arctic Council in 2013, India commissioned a multi-sensor moored observatory in Svalbard in 2014 and an atmospheric laboratory in 2016. The work at these stations focuses on examining Arctic ice systems and glaciers and the consequences of Arctic melt on the Himalayas and the Indian monsoon.

Even so, the issue of Indian engagement in the Arctic divides the country's academic and policy communities. Opinions are split over the potential impacts of the changing climate in the Arctic on India's economy. The concern primarily stems from mining in the region for fossil fuels, an area where India has yet to articulate a clear economic strategy. The proponents of economic exploitation in the Arctic advocate a pragmatic approach in the region, especially around oil and gas exploration, and mining. The sceptics warn about the potential environmental consequences and underscore the need for a more balanced policy framework that recognises the negative aspects of maritime resource exploitation.

Potential for collaboration

Norway, the present chair of the Arctic Council, has close ties with India. Since the late 1980s, the two countries have collaborated to investigate changing conditions in the Arctic and Antarctic, as well as their impact on South Asia. As climate change ends up more deeply affecting the Arctic and the South Asian monsoon, these efforts have accelerated over time.

India's present policy is to cooperate with Arctic countries in green energy, and green and clean industries, as a way of bolstering its 'responsible stakeholder' credentials. With Denmark and Finland, for instance, Indian collaboration has come in areas such as waste management, pollution control, renewable energy, and green technology. Many believe a partnership with Norway could be transformational for India as it would enable greater Indian participation in the Arctic Council's working groups, tackling issues such as the blue economy, connectivity, maritime transportation, investment and infrastructure, and responsible resource development. While the Indian government seems keen to benefit from seabed mining and resource exploitation in the Arctic, it ought to unequivocally back a sustainable mode of extraction.

Understandably, a partnership with Norway is likely to be focused on scientific research and climate and environmental protection. These are two of the six pillars that comprise India's Arctic Policy (the other four being economic and human development; transportation and connectivity; governance and international cooperation; and national capacity building). India would perhaps still look to explore economic opportunities in the Arctic. Norway could, then, help India design a sustainable policy that accommodates the needs of both the scientific community and industry. As global geopolitical tensions are also mounting in the Arctic, finding constructive and non-sensitive ways to alleviate pressure will be in the interest of both India and Norway.

While the Indian government seems keen to benefit from seabed mining and resource exploitation in the Arctic, it ought to unequivocally back a sustainable mode of extraction

The Next-Gen steps up in J&K

The BJP's main plank is dynasty politics, but the regional parties are unfazed

STATE OF PLAY

Peerzada Ashiq
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This is an election of many firsts in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It is the first parliamentary election after the State of J&K was bifurcated into the two Union Territories, and its special constitutional status scrapped, on August 5, 2019. This is also the first election in which the next generation of influential families in the region – the Abdullahs, Muftis, and Azads – are plunging into politics, even as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continues to attack the practice of dynastic politics, a strategy which it hopes will help it keep these political families in J&K at bay.

The reins of the National Conference (NC), a party which was founded by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1939, has remained firmly with the Abdullahs for more than nine decades despite the efforts by rivals, both within and outside the party, to dislodge them. The name Abdullah remains the pivot of the party.

However, successions have never been a cakewalk. Sheikh Abdullah's son, Farooq Abdullah, succeeded him as the leader of the party in a formal ceremony on August 21, 1981, at Mujahid Manzil in Srinagar's downtown area. But given the souring of relations between the Abdullahs and the Gandhi family then, there were apprehensions that the Congress-led Centre would remove Sheikh Abdullah as J&K's Chief Minister.

Since the 1980s, there has been no formal succession of the Abdullahs in J&K. Dr. Farooq Abdullah's son Omar Abdullah saw a subdued entry into politics in 1998, at a time when J&K was in the grip of militancy. Mr. Omar Abdullah became India's youngest minister at the age of 29 and held the portfolio of Minister of State, Commerce and Industry, in 1999 under the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The NDA believed then that only the Abdullahs could save Kashmir from separatists and militants.

Cut to 2024. Zahir and Zamir Abdullah, Mr. Omar Abdullah's sons, were conspicuous at the NC's iftar party thrown for local journalists. The two of them joined the evening prayers and helped their father place *traems*, copper plates from which four persons eat – a marker of traditional Kashmiri hospitality. Both the sons hold law degrees and have begun expressing their political views. Commenting on a recent speech by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu, promising to restore Statehood, Mr. Zahir Abdullah wrote on social media, "Yet again, vague and ambiguous timelines (from the PM)."

When People's Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti, who is the daughter of former Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, was jailed on the eve of August 5, 2019, in Kashmir, her daughter Iltija Mufti became the face and voice of the party. Ms. Iltija Mufti's plunge into politics is complete now. She has been visiting residents and getting feedback on various issues in the remote areas of south Kashmir, where her mother is taking on political stalwarts such as the NC's Mian Altaf and the Democratic Progressive Azad Party's Ghulam Nabi Azad. By speaking about issues faced by rural women and employing social media to connect with the youth, Ms. Iltija Mufti is clearly preparing to take up a bigger role within the party.

Similarly, Mr. Azad's son, Saddam Nabi Azad, has been canvassing for his father online and offline.

These developments have brought the dynasty debate into focus once again. The reason the BJP is unable to make a dent despite its accusations of dynasty rule resonating with voters is that the party has failed to bring in a new crop of politicians to take on these families. The leaders propped up by the BJP through the panchayat and municipal elections in the past five years have failed to infuse new blood into the party or emerge as alternatives to these families.

On the other hand, the Abdullahs and Muftis have captured the discourse by defending J&K's intra-regional identity and fighting for the restoration of autonomous status to J&K. This has struck a chord with the people and diffused the BJP's dynasty narrative. The only worrying sign for them is the murmurs within their parties about the need to create a more competitive and democratic space for non-family members.

Responding to accusations of dynasty politics, Dr. Farooq Abdullah recently said, "Dynasts may be the case in Bollywood and business. In politics, people and votes propel a leader... A leader has to connect with the people and garner support to win elections."

What share of global CO_2 emissions come from aviation?

Aviation accounts for 2.5% of global CO_2 emissions. But it has contributed around 4% to global warming to date

DATA POINT

Hannah Ritchie

Flying is one of the most carbon-intensive activities, yet it contributes just 2.5% of the world's carbon emissions. How does this add up? Well, nearly everyone in the world does not fly. Studies estimate that just 10% of the world flies in most years. But as incomes rise, this will change.

Increased demand and technological improvements have driven the change in aviation emissions over the last 50 years. Total CO2 emissions are often explained through the "Kaya identity" – how many people there are, their income, the energy efficiency of economies, and the carbon intensity of energy. We can use a similar framework to understand the drivers of aviation emissions.

This article looks at historical changes in aviation demand, efficiency, and its contribution to climate change. Most of this work is based on an excellent paper by Candelaria Bergero and colleagues and another by David Lee and colleagues. To calculate carbon emissions from aviation, we need to know three metrics. Aviation demand: how many passenger and freight kilometers; energy efficiency: how much energy is used per km; carbon intensity: what fuel is being used, which tells us the carbon emitted per unit of energy. Multiply these metrics together, and we get CO2 emissions.

Chart 1 shows trends in these relevant metrics since 1990. For now, let's ignore the period of the pandemic and focus on the trends up to 2019. Between 1990 and 2019, both passenger and freight demand approximately quadrupled. In 2019, passengers travelled more than 8 trillion km, which is about the same as a light year.

At the same time, flying has become more than twice as energy efficient. Travelling one passenger-km in 1990 used 2.9 megajoules (MJ) of energy. By 2019, this had more than halved to 1.3 MJ. This efficiency has come from improved design and technology, larger planes that can carry more passengers, and a higher 'passenger load factor'. Empty seats are less common than in the past.

The carbon intensity of that fuel – how much CO2 is emitted per unit – has not changed at all. We used standard jet fuel in 1990 and we are using the same today. It has not become any cleaner. Biofuels and other alternatives are just a tiny fraction of global demand.

If flying has become more than twice as energy efficient, and the carbon emitted per unit of energy has not changed, then it follows that the carbon efficiency of traveling one km is also more than twice as high. In 1990, one passenger-km would emit 357 grams of CO2. By 2019, this had more than halved to 157 grams. How have the changes in demand and technology affected CO2 emissions?

If demand has quadrupled, but aviation has become twice as efficient, then emissions will double. The gains in efficiency have partly counteracted the emissions from increased demand. In 1990, global aviation emitted around 0.5 billion tonnes. In 2019, that was around 1 billion as shown in Chart 1.

Global CO2 emissions from aviation have quadrupled since the 1960s. To examine a longer-term perspective, the recent data was extended back to 1940 **(Chart 2)**. Emissions have quadrupled since the mid-1960s.

Aviation's share in global emissions has been calculated using the time series above and total CO2 emissions data using the Global Carbon Project. In 2019, aviation accounted for 2.5% of CO2 emissions from fossil sources and land use. This share fluctuated from 2% to 2.5% since the mid-1990s but with a marked increase since 2010 **(Chart 3).**

Dr. Hannah Ritchie is the Deputy Editor and Science Outreach Lead in OurWorldInData

Polluted skies

Hannah Ritchie (2024) - "What share of global CO_2 emissions come from aviation?" Published online at OurWorldInData.org.

Chart 1: The charts show year-wise global aviation demand, energy efficiency and CO_2 emissions

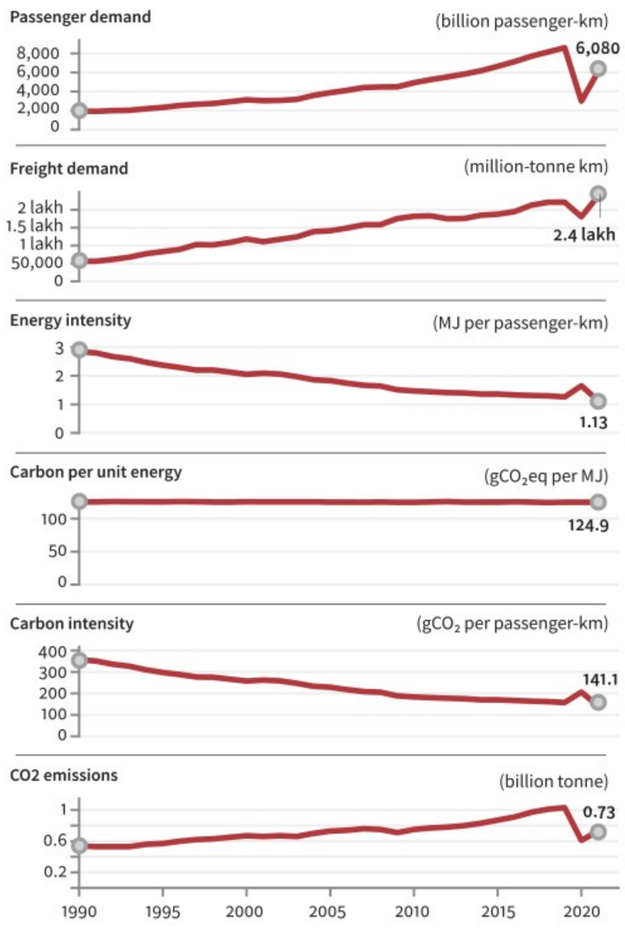


Chart 2: The chart shows global CO_2 emissions from aviation

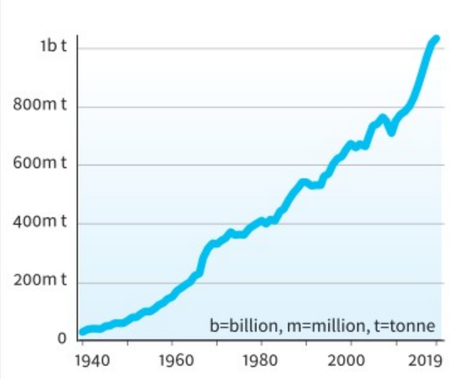
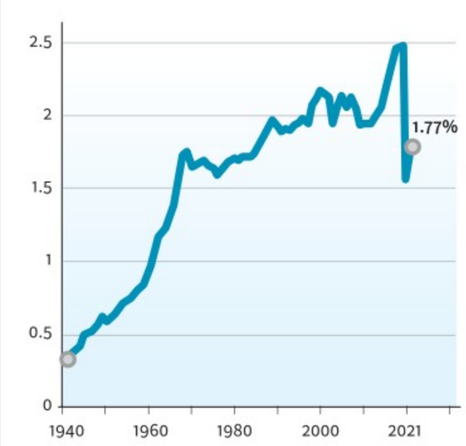


Chart 3: The chart shows aviation's share in global CO_2 emissions



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 16, 1974

Railmen decide to go on indefinite strike from May 8

New Delhi, April 15: Following the deadlock at to-day's talks with the Railway Board on the railwaymen's demands, the National Co-ordination Committee of Railway Unions has decided to launch an "indefinite strike from May 8." The Co-ordination Committee, after over six hours of deliberations, to-night called upon the three Railway federations and other Railway unions to serve a 14-day notice on the Railways on April 23 for the strike from May 8.
Meanwhile, the Railway Minister, Mr. I.N. Mishra, has conveyed to Mr. George Fernandez that the Member (Staff) of the Railway Board, Mr. G.P. Warrier's talks with the Negotiating Committee earlier in the day, were not the "last words" and that he (Mr. Mishra) would like to meet him (Mr. Fernandez) and other members of the Committee on the afternoon of April 18. Though the date for the proposed indefinite strike has been fixed by the Co-ordination Committee, the time from which the strike should commence is to be decided to-morrow. Mr. Fernandez, after his discussion with the Railway Board Member, Mr. Warrier, had written to the Railway Minister, Mr. Mishra, pointing out the "dead end" reached in the talks since the Government's position on all the demands "was totally negative." "We have certain just and legitimate demands and your Ministry's response is a flat 'no' to all our demands. The National Co-ordination Committee is due to meet at 3 p.m. to-day and we would have appreciated knowing from you whether Mr. Warrier's word is the last word. And if it is not, then how and where do we go from here?" Mr. Fernandez in his letter asked Mr. Mishra.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 16, 1924

Lake levels of Victoria Nyanza

In a geographical memoir by O.E.P. Brooks, the author has set forth that the variations in the lake levels of Victoria Nyanza from 1896 to 1922 and those of Albert Nyanza from 1904 to 1922 as recorded by tide gauges, have occurred more in accordance with variations in sunspots than with those of rainfall. As most of the rain is removed by evaporation and as evaporation is highest during the periods of minimum sunspots, the lake levels are then lowest. He points out the level was highest in 1917, a year of maximum sunspots and there was no increase of rainfall to account for the high level.

From Page One

Indian officials can 'soon' meet crew: Iran

In an interview to news agency PTI, Israel's Ambassador to India Naor Gilon said Israel expects from India, as a friend, to be "very strong in international community in making sure that Iran stops its destabilisation of West Asia".

However, the MEA statement was received with some disappointment in Israel.

"As a supporter of Indian foreign policy, I find the weak, balanced MEA statement disappointing. I expected India to publicly condemn the attack, as did so many other friends [and] partners of Israel around the world," wrote former Israeli Ambassador to India Daniel Carmon.

Mr. Carmon was referring to the statements by the U.S., its allies and Western countries strongly condemning the strikes and affirming support for Israel, in contrast to the statement from New Delhi. On Sunday, the Iranian MFA summoned envoys of U.K., Germany and France to protest their statements condemning the Iranian actions.

Mr. Abdollahaian also said that Iran had warned the United States against any "misadventure" in support of Israel.

(With inputs from Bengaluru)

Above-normal monsoon likely, says IMD

The models indicate a 30% chance of monsoon rains being over 10%, categorised as 'excess' in the IMD vocabulary. This is a significant jump considering that in any given year there is only a 17% chance of such 'excess' rain.

June and July are considered the most important monsoon months for agriculture given that a large fraction of the kharif crop is planted in these months. The agency, however, did not indicate the rainfall quantity expected in these months.

One of the two factors favouring plentiful rain was a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), or a cooler than normal Indian Ocean in the east as compared to the west, which again helps bring rain to several States in southern India. Though currently 'neutral', it is expected to turn positive by August.

Another factor was a below-normal snow cover in the northern hemisphere and Eurasia. Historically, there was an "inverse relationship" between the levels of snow here and the monsoon, said Dr. Mohapatra.

EC pegs pre-poll seizure at ₹4,650 crore

The seizures were a critical part of its resolve to hold the Lok Sabha election free of inducements and electoral malpractices and to ensure a level-playing field.

In this context, EC sources also said that checking or searching of helicopters, such as in the case of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Trinamool Congress's Abhishek Banerjee were part of standard instructions to ensure inducement-free polls.

Election officials conducted checks in a helicopter carrying Mr. Gandhi in the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. The flying squad officials conducted the search after the helicopter landed. Mr. Gandhi was on his way to his parliamentary constituency of Wayanad in Kerala.

The Trinamool had complained to the poll body about the I-T department's search of a helicopter to be used by Mr. Banerjee to go to Haldia.

Goods exports hit $41.68 billion in March

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that India has now moved into a positive cycle of export growth after an "extremely difficult year".

While goods exports in the first 10 months averaged $35.4 billion, the last two months' spike lifted the full-year export figure to $437.1 billion, 3.1% below the record $451.1 billion performance in the previous year. Goods imports dropped by a sharper 5.41% to $677.24 billion in 2023-24, which helped moderate India's trade deficit for the year to $240.2 billion, 9.33% lower than the preceding year. While official figures for services exports are only available till February, the Commerce Ministry estimated that they shrank 6.2% in March to $28.5 billion, while imports dropped 6.6% to $15.8 billion.

Modi in T.N. to make up for loss in North: Stalin

Talking about the election manifesto of the BJP, Mr. Stalin said Mr. Modi would always give guarantees without any warranty.

"They have cut and pasted their old promises. People have ignored the promises because they have come to the conclusion that he was not going to form the government. People have not taken the BJP's manifesto seriously. They have prepared a manifesto without the word 'India'. People will create an India without the BJP in the election," he said.

Modi lauds poll bond scheme, says scrapping it is a mistake

PM accuses Opposition of spreading lies about the scheme, which, he says, was brought to free elections of black money; claims the ED had contributed significantly towards tackling corruption

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the country had been pushed towards black money in elections after the Supreme Court scrapped the electoral bonds scheme, and that upon honest reflection, "everyone will regret it".

In clear terms: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the electoral bonds scheme should be viewed as a success story. ANI

In his first detailed take on the electoral bonds scheme after it was scrapped, Mr. Modi, in an interview to the news agency ANI, said that the scheme should also be viewed as a success story as it had shown who made contributions to political parties.

He said there was a lot of scope for improvement in the scheme. "There has been a discussion in our country for a long time that [through] black money a dangerous game is there in elections. I wanted that we try something, how can our elections be free from this black money, how can there be transparency? There was a pure thought in my mind. We were looking for a way. We found a small way, we never claimed that this was the absolute way," he said.

"Whether what happened in the process was good or bad can be an issue of debate, I never say that there is no shortcoming in decision-making. We learn after discussing and improve. There is a lot of scope of improvement in this also. But today we have completely pushed the country towards black money, hence I say everyone will regret it. When they will think honestly, everyone will regret it," he said.

The Prime Minister took on the Opposition accusing it of spreading lies over electoral bonds, and said that of the 3,000 companies that gave donations through the scheme, 26 faced action by probe agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Of these 26 companies, there were 16 that bought electoral bonds when they faced action, he said. "Of these [16 companies] 37% of the amount went to the BJP and 63% to parties opposed to BJP," he said.

Mr. Modi also denied allegations by the Opposition that there was a lack of a level playing field, and said that laws regarding the institutions were formed before his tenure, and that the Opposition was only trying to find an excuse for its impending defeat.

Highlighting that only 3% of cases filed by the ED – which the Opposition parties said was being used by the Modi government to target them – were against persons involved in politics, Mr. Modi said a much higher amount of cash had been seized by the agency in the past 10 years than ever before.

"How many Opposition leaders are in jail? No one tells me. And is this the same Opposition leader... who used to run their government? There is fear of sin [*paap ka dar hai*]. What fear does an honest person have? They had put my Home Minister in jail when I was Chief Minister," he said.

He lauded the ED and said that since he had taken charge at the Centre in 2014, the Central agency had significantly contributed towards tackling corruption.

He said corruption had destroyed the country and it had to be tackled with full might. "We should fight against corruption with our full strength. And this is my personal conviction," he said.

With regard to the Election Commission, he said that it was in fact under his government that a law "improving" the process of appointing Election Commissioners by a three-member committee that included the Leader of the Opposition was cleared. "We at least have members from the Opposition in the committee. Earlier, those close to the 'family' were made Election Commissioners who later got Rajya Sabha seats and Ministries. We [BJP] can't play at that level," he said. Mr. Modi also questioned the "compulsion" of the Congress in allying with the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu whose leaders had made objectionable remarks on *Sanatana Dharma*.

'PM was mastermind of the world's biggest extortion scheme'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The electoral bonds scheme is the biggest extortion scheme and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the mastermind behind it, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Monday in response to the Prime Minister's comments on the scheme in an interview to the news agency ANI.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at an election rally in Coimbatore on April 12. AFP

'Trying damage control'

The leader of the principal Opposition party asserted that the money trail through the scheme was only because of the Supreme Court as the State Bank of India (SBI) resisted full disclosures and called the Prime Minister's defence of the scheme a "pathetic attempt at damage control".

"The important thing in an electoral bond is names and dates. When you carefully see the names and dates, you will know that when they [donors] gave the electoral bond, right after that some contract was given to them or a CBI inquiry was withdrawn against them," Mr. Gandhi told reporters.

The former Congress president said the Prime Minister should be asked to explain why one day the CBI inquiry starts against a company and soon after bonds were purchased, the inquiry was closed.

Similarly, after a company donated electoral bonds, they were given the contract, the party leader claimed.

"Prime Minister is caught here, that's why he is giving interview to ANI. This is the biggest extortion scheme of the world and PM Modi is the mastermind of it," Mr. Gandhi alleged.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said: "The electoral bond money trail is ENTIRELY because of the Supreme Court which is now being threatened. The PM is as usual lying since he got SBI to resist full disclosure till the last minute. Pathetic attempt at damage control".

"The SBI demanded three months to match donor data with political parties. It took less than 15 seconds and just five lines of Python code. Clearly, the SBI was seeking to postpone disclosure of donors on behalf of the Modi Sarkar," Mr. Ramesh added in a subsequent statement.

Plea in SC seeks review of poll bond judgment

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A review petition in the Supreme Court has sought a review of a Constitution Bench judgment that struck down the electoral bonds scheme "alleging a make-believe violation of fundamental rights".

The petition said Parliament, where petitioner-lawyer Mathews J. Nedumpara was "symbolically present", had ushered in the scheme through an amendment in the Finance Act to curb black money.

The electoral bonds scheme would not have totally eradicated black money, the petitioner admitted but also claimed that it nevertheless had brought in "some element of transparency" by embracing confidentiality about donors.

SC seeks ED response on Kejriwal arrest, denies interim relief to CM

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court sought a response from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday to a petition by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to quash his arrest in the Delhi excise policy case, but did not relent to order his "interim release" or list the case on April 19.

Instead, a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta scheduled the case for the week commencing on April 29, urging Mr. Kejriwal's lawyers to keep the powder dry till the next hearing.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi and advocate Shadan Farasat urged the court for an "extraordinarily short date", possibly April 19.

Mr. Singhvi pleaded with the court to consider the "timing of the Chief Minister's arrest" by the ED. He said the arrest was timed to prevent the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener from campaigning for the Lok Sabha election.

Legal wrangle: Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal leaves in a car after a court extended his judicial custody, in New Delhi on March 28. AP

The senior advocate said he had facts that would "shock the conscience of the court".

Mr. Singhvi said the Delhi excise policy case was from September 2022. There was a First Information Report and an Enforcement Case Information Report. There were eight charge sheets and 15 statements had been recorded in the case so far.

"Mr. Kejriwal's name does not figure in any of these documents," he submitted.

But Justice Khanna responded that the lawyer should "reserve his arguments for the next date of hearing".

'Selective leaks'

Mr. Singhvi said there had been a lot of "selective leaks all over the place giving everybody a wrong impression" about the case of Mr. Kejriwal. "I am not aware of any selective leaks," Justice Sanjiv Khanna responded.

Justice Khanna said it was not possible to give a date before the week commencing on April 29.

"We have given you a reasonable date... We have given you a short date. In no other case have we given such an early date when we could have given you a longer one," the judge told Mr. Singhvi.

The court asked the ED to file its response by April 24. Mr. Kejriwal has to file his rejoinder by April 26.

SC dismisses plea to help displaced Manipuris

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to intervene in a petition filed by the Manipur Tribal Forum and two individuals seeking a direction to the Election Commission (EC) to make arrangements for persons who had fled the conflict and are currently residing in other States to vote in the Lok Sabha election.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said with merely three days left for polling in Manipur on April 19, it was too late for the court to intervene. "Interference at this belated stage would cause substantial impediments in the conduct of elections in Manipur," Chief Justice Chandrachud reasoned.

'Too late'

The EC countered the petition, saying they had approached the court too late.

"But some delay cannot take away my constitutional right to vote. I want to vote. Delay cannot be a reason for denial," advocate Hetvi Patel, appearing for the petitioners, said.

The petition said there were 18,000 internally displaced persons from Manipur who had fled the violence, which began on May 3, 2023, living in other States.

It was impossible for them to enter Manipur, leave alone go to the constituency where they were registered as voters. The situation in their home State was still volatile as two people were killed in the hills only a day back, she submitted.

Special polling booths could be set up for them in the States where they were currently residing.

BJP complains to EC against Rahul Gandhi for remarks on Modi

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The BJP has filed a complaint with the Election Commission against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of creating "a linguistic and cultural divide" with his remarks during his recent Lok Sabha election campaign in Coimbatore.

In its complaint, the BJP said Mr. Gandhi tried to create a linguistic and cultural divide between the Tamil-speaking people and others by levelling a "baseless" allegation that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants only one language in India, implying that he is against Tamil language. "By making this false, unsubstantiated, unverified and baseless allegation, he has hit at the credibility of the Prime Minister, besides creating a bias against him in the minds of people of Tamil Nadu."

On the other hand, Mr. Modi has very clearly exhibited his utmost respect for Tamil language and culture, and has expressed his desire to develop Tamil into an international language, it said.

The BJP appealed to the EC to direct the Congress leader to tender an unconditional public apology.

Retired judges raise concern over undermining judiciary

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The letter follows a recent missive by 600 lawyers about a 'particular vested interest group' pressuring the judiciary

Over 20 retired judges from the Supreme Court and High Courts have written to Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud conveying their "shared concern" about the escalating attempts to undermine the judiciary through "tactics of misinformation" and public disparagement.

The letter follows a recent missive by 600 lawyers voicing the same concerns about a "particular vested interest group" pressuring the judiciary, influencing the judicial process, and defaming the higher courts on the basis of frivolous logic and stale political agendas.

"This behaviour, we observe, is particularly pronounced in the cases and causes of social, economic and political significance, including the cases involving certain individuals, wherein the lines between advocacy and manoeuvring are blurred to the detriment of judicial independence," the retired judges said, drawing their insight from their years on the Bench.

The former judges, including retired Supreme Court judges Justices Deepak Verma, Dinesh Maheshwari, Krishna Murari, and M.R. Shah, assured that they stand in solidarity with the judiciary.

The retired judges urged the top court to fortify itself against the workings of factions motivated by narrow political interests and personal gains "to erode the public's confidence in our judicial system".

They said these factions "selectively praise judicial decisions that align with one's views while vehemently criticising those that do not".

ELECTIONS 2024

Azad, Lone take a 'tourist' jibe on Omar Abdullah

Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad and the J&K Peoples Conference on Monday labelled National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah "a tourist".

"Omar Abdullah is a tourist who spends summers in London and winters in warmer climates abroad," Mr. Azad said while canvassing in the Chenab Valley, which is part of the Udhampur-Doda constituency.

Mr. Azad's tourist jibe came just a day after JKPC chief Sajad Lone, who is pitted against Mr. Abdullah in the Baramulla seat, made a similar remark, obliquely suggesting Mr. Abdullah was an outsider for the seat. Mr. Lone again targeted Mr. Abdullah on Monday and questioned the NC's relations with the BJP.

Ghulam Nabi Azad addresses an election campaign rally of the DPAP on Saturday. ANI

Trinamool to issue manifesto in six languages

In an attempt to reach out to every section, the Trinamool Congress is releasing its manifesto in six languages including Nepali and in the Oi Chiki script of the Santhali language.

The Santhals are the largest tribe in Bengal and are concentrated in the seats of West Medinipur, Bankura and Burdwan.

In the 2016 Assembly election, the party had published its manifesto in Oi Chiki.

The party is also trying to cater to the Nepali population, since the two constituencies where the Gurkha population is high — Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri — are both held by the BJP. Besides these two, the manifesto will be published in Bangla, Hindi, English, and Urdu.

"There was no consultation with responsible people (about the RLD joining the NDA). The sudden decision has left people shocked

NARESH TIKAIT
Bharatiya Kisan Union leader

Congress expels veteran leader in Odisha

Veteran Odisha Congress leader and six-time MLA Suresh Kumar Routray has been expelled from the party on charges of indiscipline and anti-party activities. Mr. Routray's expulsion has come following his open support to his son who has been fielded by the BJD in Bhubaneswar.

"The demand of 'Greater Tipraland' went away as Tipra Motha chief Pradyot Debbarma joined hands with the BJP

JITENDRA CHAUDHURY
Tripura CPI(M) leader

Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh and Union Home Minister Amit Shah at an election rally in Imphal on Monday. PTI/@AMITSHAH

Conspiracy to alter Manipur's demography thwarted: Shah

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that the Narendra Modi government had ended the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the 1,600-km India-Myanmar border to thwart a "conspiracy" to change the demography of Manipur. "No matter how hard anyone tries, we will not let anyone divide Manipur," he said at a campaign rally in support of the BJP's Inner Manipur candidate in Imphal.

Earlier this year on February 8, Mr. Shah had posted on social media platform X that the Government of India had decided to scrap the FMR between the two countries.

Ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo people and the majority Meitei community erupted in the State in May 2023. While Kuki-Zo legislators, including those from the BJP, have demanded a separate administration, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has blamed the porous border and free movement along Myanmar as the reasons for the violence.

The Kuki-Zo people share ethnic ties with people in Myanmar and Bangladesh and are among the hill tribes for whom the FMR was meant.

At the rally, flanked by Mr. Singh on one side and the BJP's Manipur president on the other, Mr. Shah said, "I know that in this State, intruders are coming in and conspiring to change the demography of the State." He said that this was why the Modi government had decided to start fencing the India-Myanmar border and had decided to scrap the Free Movement Regime between the two countries.

'Not splitting up Manipur priority'

Mr. Shah said, "I want to say to the people in the hills and in the valley. In the future, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's priority is to talk to the parties involved in the conflict and bring peace to the State while ensuring that Manipur is not split up under any circumstance," he said.

"Your Chief Minister, Biren Singh does not say much about what he has done for the people of Manipur, but I will tell you. He mustered the courage and brought the bold proposal before the PM to introduce the Inner Line Permit to save Manipur from being broken apart and Modi *ji* has followed through on it. To secure Manipur," Mr. Shah said. Taking aim at the Congress, Mr. Shah said that this election in Manipur was not a fight between the Congress and the BJP. He said, "It is between those who talk about breaking Manipur apart and those who talk about keeping it together. Congress always talks about breaking the nation into pieces..."

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh hit out at the BJP over the Prime Minister's absence from Manipur ever since the conflict began.

On Monday, Mr. Ramesh, posted a set of questions to the BJP-led government and the PM, saying, "The Prime Minister has abandoned all responsibility for the BJP-manufactured crisis in Manipur. However, his Home Minister has found the time to campaign in the State today, and we hope he takes the initiative to answer a few questions on behalf of the PM."

Bihar power play begins with four seats; BJP, allies lock horns with grand alliance

The four constituencies, which went to the NDA in 2019, will vote in the first of the seven-phase polls in the State; BJP has fielded candidates in Aurangabad and Nawada, and allotted Gaya and Jamui to HAM-S and LJP-RV respectively; RJD leads Opposition grand alliance's fight in all four seats

OVERVIEW

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

The first of the seven-phase Lok Sabha election in Bihar will see the four constituencies of Aurangabad, Gaya, Jamui and Nawada going to the polls on April 19.

The fates of 38 candidates will be decided in these four constituencies, with Gaya having the highest number of 14 candidates in the fray.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, all four seats went to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) – the BJP in Aurangabad, the Janata Dal (U) in Gaya, and the then united Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) in Jamui and Nawada.

In the 2024 election, the BJP has fielded its candidates for the Aurangabad and Nawada constituencies, with the Gaya (reserved) seat going to its ally, the Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAM-S), and the Jamui (reserved) seat to another alliance partner, the Chirag Paswan-led Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas (LJP-RV).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off his election campaign in Bihar from Jamui on April 4, and addressed a public meeting in Nawada on April 7. He is scheduled to address another public meeting in Gaya on Tuesday.

In Aurangabad, three-time BJP MP Sushil Kumar Singh stands against the Opposition *mahagathbandhan* candidate and new entrant Abhay Kushwaha, who is fighting on Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) ticket. Mr. Kushwaha was a JD(U) MLA from the Tekari Assembly constituency in 2015 but recently joined the RJD.

A Rajput-dominated seat, Aurangabad also has a sizeable number of Other Backward Class (OBC) and Extremely Backward Class (EBC) voters. Mr. Kushwaha belongs to an OBC community.

The constituency has over 18 lakh voters – 25% of them are from the General Category, 20% are OBC, over 23% EBC, 20% are Scheduled Castes, and 10% are Muslims. In the General Category, over 70% voters are Rajputs.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has fielded Sunesh Kumar, and has made the battle for Aurangabad tough for both the NDA and *mahagathbandhan* candidates, say observers.

At Nawada, the BJP's Vivek Thakur has a tough fight on his hands with Shrawan Kushwaha, an OBC candidate fielded by the *mahagathbandhan*, and Independent candidates Vinod Yadav and Bhojpuri singer Gunjan Singh as his opponents.

Earlier, the Aurangabad Lok Sabha constituency was represented by firebrand BJP leader and Union Minister Giriraj Singh but in the 2019 election, the seat was won by then united LJP's Chandan Singh.

Pitching the local versus outsider angle, Mr. Shrawan Kushwaha has been saying, *"jo yahan ka beta hoga, wohi yahan ka neta hoga* [only a local will lead]". Mr. Thakur, who comes from Patna district, has played down the issue as "insignificant".

Both Mr. Thakur and Mr. Kushwaha are contesting a Lok Sabha election for the first time. Mr. Thakur is campaigning on the NDA's development plank while Mr. Shrawan Kushwaha underlines the "lack of development, industry, and good hospital facilities and schools" in the constituency.

Phase 1 battle

The table lists the winners, runners-up and their vote shares in the four constituencies going to the polls in the first phase in Bihar

Constituency	Party (winner)	Vote share	Party (runner-up)	Vote share
2019				
AURANGABAD	BJP	45.75%	HAM(S)	38.20%
GAYA (SC)	JD(U)	48.79%	HAM(S)	32.86%
JAMUI (SC)	LJP	55.75%	BLSP	30.35%
NAWADA	LJP	52.59%	RJD	36.88
2014				
AURANGABAD	BJP	39.16%	Cong.	30.73%
GAYA (SC)	BJP	40.31%	RJD	26.04%
JAMUI (SC)	LJP	36.79%	RJD	25.71%
NAWADA	BJP	44.12%	RJD	28.28%

Sea of green: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav addressing a public meeting in Aurangabad district. PTI

The contest for Gaya

From the Gaya (reserved) seat, Jitan Ram Manjhi of the HAM(S) is pitted against the RJD's Kumar Sarvajeet. Mr. Manjhi, 79, a former Chief Minister of Bihar, is trying his luck from the constituency for the fourth time, while Mr. Sarvajeet, 49, is the RJD's sitting MLA from Bodh Gaya and a former State Agriculture and Tourism Minister. His father, the late Rajesh Kumar, became an MP after defeating Mr. Manjhi in the 1991 Lok Sabha election, and his father's murder in 2005 resulted in Mr. Sarvajeet's plunge into politics. "Now, I'll defeat him [Mr. Manjhi] in his fourth attempt," Mr. Sarvajeet said.

Also in the fray is the BSP's Sushma Kumari, who is banking on the sizeable chunk of EBC voters in the constituency. Over 30% of the voters in the constituency belong to the Scheduled Castes (SC). The biggest issue in the constituency has been water scarcity.

For the Jamui (reserved) seat, LJP-RV chief Mr. Chirag Paswan has fielded his brother-in-law Arun Bharti, against *mahagathbandhan* candidate Archana Ravidas of the RJD. Ms. Ravidas is the wife of local RJD leader Mukesh Yadav, and is contesting the Lok Sabha election for the first time.

Mr. Chirag Paswan has been the MP from Jamui twice, in 2014 and 2019, but this time, he is contesting from his late father Ram Vilas Paswan's stronghold, the Hajipur (reserved) seat in Vaishali district.

The Jamui (reserved) seat, which has a total 17 lakh voters, has nearly 2.5 lakh EBC voters, with an equal number of OBC Yadav voters, and Koeri, Kurmi and Dhanuk voters. The constituency, spread over the three districts of Munger, Jamui and Sheikhpura, and six Assembly segments of Tarapur, Sheikpura, Sikandra, Jamui, Jhajha and Chakai, also has about 1.5 lakh Muslim voters.

Poll fervour peaks in Andaman in run-up to April 19; to booths, by road, sea, and foot

T. Ramakrishnan

The Andaman and Nicobar islands, an archipelago in the Bay of Bengal with nearly 3.15 lakh electors, have been part of the national mainstream despite being cut off from the mainland by at least 900 km – if one takes into account the distance between the northernmost point of the islands and the mouth of the Hooghly river. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress, which are the main adversaries at the all-India level, are the principal political forces in this group of islands, too.

For over 25 years, the two national parties have been dominating the political landscape on these islands, which have a lone Lok Sabha constituency.

As they go to the polls on April 19 along with 101 other constituencies on the mainland, it is going to be yet another intense battle between the two parties. The only difference this time is that the BJP, which won three times since 1999, has brought back the experienced three-time MP, Bishnu Pada Ray to take on the incumbent MP, Kuldeep Rai Sharma, of the Congress.

In 2019, Mr. Ray, who is now 73, was replaced with Vishal Jolly, who lost to Mr. Sharma by a margin of nearly 1,400 votes.

Wins and votes

A year-wise look at the winners and runners-up of the lone Lok Sabha seat in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and their vote shares

Year	Winner	Vote share (%)	Runner-up	Vote share (%)
1999	BJP	52.7	Cong.	43.2
2004	Cong.	55.8	BJP	35.9
2009	BJP	44.2	Cong.	42.5
2014	BJP	47.8	Cong.	43.7
2019	Cong.	45.9	BJP	45.3

Others in fray

Apart from these two contestants, there are 10 others in the fray now, including five Independents.

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), a major party in Tamil Nadu, is contesting for the first time, says its candidate, the 50-year-old contractor-turned-politician K.J.B. Selvaraj.

Mr. Ray, exuding confidence that he will get back the Andamans for the BJP that will also retain power at the Centre yet again, says that this time, even the tribal communities will support the party. He lists a number of promises, including the improvement of infrastructure, which includes air connectivity.

While Mr. Sharma is banking on the traditional strengths of his party, Mr. Selvaraj says that both parties have failed the people of the islands and his party will provide an effective alternative to the established parties.

Apart from an inadequate road link for all the inhabited islands, power supply disruptions and shortage of drinking water are among the issues that bother the common man in the Andamans. "The poor quality of roads is another problem," P. Kannan, a social activist who was a government official earlier, said.

Another resident of Port Blair, the capital of the Union Territory, says that the islands, which are located close to southeast Asia with rich biological diversity in the form of plants, animals and underwater life, have enormous potential for tourism development, but the push that the islands deserve has not yet been given by New Delhi.

In addition to 96 wildlife sanctuaries, nine national parks and one biosphere reserve, the islands are known for historically significant landmarks – the Cellular Jail, the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, and Viper Island, the resident added.

Connectivity challenges

Fully conscious of various challenges in ensuring a high voter turnout on these diverse islands, B.S. Jaglan, Chief Electoral Officer, said that many polling stations are in isolated places, which have connectivity partly by road, partly by sea, and thereafter by foot, thus requiring six to seven hours to reach from any main road.

Plans have been drawn up, leveraging IT and using Google/GPS maps on transportation routes. Satellite phones have been provided for officials in remote areas for smooth delivery of services.

As for ensuring all-inclusive participation, the authorities have included three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) – the Great Andamanese, the Onges, and the Shompens – on the electoral roll.

Only Jarawas have been left out as the Sentinelese, the fifth PVTG on the islands, do not have contact with the rest of the world, Mr. Jaglan said, adding that several activities, including competitions in educational institutions, *rangoli* contests, cricket matches and boat races have been conducted to increase voter awareness.

Polling will be keenly watched not only by the contestants but also by officials to ascertain if there will be any record turnout this time.

Officials fete 105-year-old for inspiring Assam voters

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The authorities of Kamrup district in central Assam felicitated 105-year-old Ramati Baishya for inspiring people to exercise their franchise.

A team led by District Commissioner and District Election Officer Keerthi Jalli visited Ms. Baishya at her residence in Dalibari village on Sunday, the first day of the Assamese New Year. Ms Jalli said the senior citizen was upbeat about casting her vote. "It was great visiting the 105-year-old *aaita* [grandmother]. If someone like her can go and vote, our young voters can too," the District Commissioner said after presenting her a gift hamper containing a *gamosa* (scarf) with SVEEP imprinted on it.

"The initiative was aimed at not only to seek blessings from senior citizens but also to draw inspiration from their lives and advocate for a 100% voter turnout," Ms. Jalli said.

Kamrup district is a part of the Guwahati Lok Sabha constituency.

INBRIEF

Will establish Ram Rajya and implement UCC, says Rajnath

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that the NDA government would "establish Ram Rajya and implement Uniform Civil Code (UCC)" if voted to power. While campaigning in the Udhampur-Doda constituency of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Singh said, "Time is not far to establish Ram Rajya. It has already started. Ram Rajya is about fulfilling duties. UCC's implementation is on the anvil. Triple talaq was done away with because it compromised the dignity of women." Citing the removal of special provisions under Article 370, he said the BJP always fulfilled promises made in its manifesto.

SC to hear arguments on BJP MP's Sandeshkhali visit

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear arguments on whether BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar defied a specific written order by the West Bengal Police denying him permission to visit violence-hit Sandeshkhali or if his right to free speech as a lawmaker was gagged by the State. In February, the State had submitted that the BJP MP was engaged in "political activity" not associated with his work as a parliamentarian. He had allegedly violated a prohibition order against 'unlawful assembly' under Section 144 of the CrPC. The court scheduled the case for hearing after two weeks.

Shekhawati calls for a stronger Opposition

Amid simmering anger over Agnipath scheme, rising inflation, and stagnant wages, the issues of Ram Temple and Article 370 are no longer cutting ice with the electorate in this semi-arid belt of north Rajasthan; the fear of one-sided government pervades in the three seats of Churu, Sikar, Jhunjhunu

GROUND REPORT

Sobhana K. Nair
JHUNJHUNU, SIKAR, CHURU

Even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterates his campaign pitch for 400-plus seats for the BJP and its allies in the Lok Sabha election, the voters in Shekhawati – the semi-arid belt in north Rajasthan – are pining for an Opposition which, they feel, has diminished into irrelevance in the past 10 years.

Hari Prasad Sharma, 59, runs a grocery shop at the Chala bus stand in Sikar. Amid the hustle and bustle, Mr. Sharma settles down for a sugary cup of tea. Rajasthan's famous onion Kachori is gently bubbling away in a large wok of hot oil on a stove nearby. By his own admission, he is not a fan of the Congress or its former president Rahul Gandhi, whom he considers "anti-Hindu". He is upfront about his 2019 vote. "I voted for BJP and Baba*ji*," he said. By "Baba*ji*" he means the Sikar MP, the saffron clad seer, Sumedhanand Saraswati, who has won the seat twice in a row. Mr. Saraswati has been fielded again by the BJP here. He is facing the CPI(M)'s Amra Ram, who has unsuccessfully contested the seat four times since 2004.

Mr. Sharma is clear that while he continues to admire Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he needs a voice for Sikar. "We need at least one among the 543 to speak for us," he proclaims. His remarks are appreciated all around. Mahavir Chaudhary, a jeep driver, who is taking a break between his rides from village to town, chips in. "They [BJP] have governments everywhere, that is why they are not interested in doing any work," he said.

With CPI(M) leader Mr. Ram's candidature, many feel that the possibility of the Congress's factional fight is minimised. The two –the Congress and the CPI (M) – have been working well together, with top Congress leaders such as Sachin Pilot campaigning for Mr. Ram.

'Autocratic government'

The fear of an "*ek tarfa*" or one-sided government pervades in the three Lok Sabha seats of Shekhawati – Churu, Sikar, and Jhunjhunu. A recurrent phrase used by many voters is that India would turn into a monarchy like "Saudi Arabia". The huge influx of the alleged "tainted" Opposition leaders into the BJP ranks and the extensive headlines on Enforcement Directorate raids against the Opposition leaders is also cited by voters as a symptom of "autocratic government".

Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma (left) during a roadshow in Sikar. FILE PHOTO

Rewant Ram Meghwal at Ramasra village in Churu unhesitatingly delivers his verdict. "It is my way or the highway for this government. For every detractor, they have ED. They will turn our country into Saudi Arabia, where we will have no portal to complaint or protest," Mr. Meghwal said. Those around him nod along.

The construction of the Ram Temple is not being seen as a game changer by the voters here, who feel that everyone contributed towards it. The development, many claimed, was only skin-deep. "In the past two elections, I have voted for the BJP in the name of Hindutva, but the area MP has not laid even a brick in our village in the past 10 years," says a government servant from Sadeensar in the Jhunjhunu constituency.

Mr. Modi, he says, will win anyway, but for Jhunjhunu he needs an Opposition MP.

The electorate is seething with anger over unemployment and see the Agnipath scheme – the short-term employment programme with the armed forces – as an insult to injury. Subash Daka, a Jat farmer, whose elder son is in the Army, is enraged. He speaks in half sentences. He asks, "Mr. Modi will be the first Prime Minister to sell the Army. How can Article 370 be the only issue? What about the fact that an entire generation of young men have been rendered unemployed? If they go for Agniveer they will retire in four years." His agitation stems from the fact that the government cancelled the recruitment process held ahead of the pandemic, even though his son had cleared the medical examination.

Heated debate

The much-touted constituency of *labarthis* that the BJP has cultivated over the years, also seem to be fraying at the edges. At Mandawra village, which falls under Jhunjhunu seat, the topic of Lok Sabha polls stirs up a heated debate, with each person presenting his own litany of woes. The village sarpanch, Gyarsilal Gujjar, like an able television anchor, sums up the debate. "The MGNREGS wages are delayed by four months, the development funds for the village haven't come in over six months. Prime Minister says he is giving free ration to 80 crore persons. The truth is while names in the ration card are deleted with every death, no additions have been made to include the births and the expanded families. Households are getting the same amount of ration that they used to get 10 years ago, even though the number of mouths to be fed may have gone up," Mr. Gujjar breathlessly races through the complaints.

This anger is not new. Building on it, the Congress won six of the eight Assembly constituencies under the Jhunjhunu Lok Sabha seat in the Assembly election. In the fray this time is Jhunjhunu MLA Brijender Ola, son of former Union Minister Sis Ram Ola, who has won this seat six times in a row between 1996 and 2009. The Congress also has a strong organisation here, having won the seat 10 out of the 17 times in the past Lok Sabha elections.

Old rivals and a newcomer compete in Meghalaya

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

If the candidates of the ruling National People's Party (NPP) win, matrilineal Meghalaya will become India's first State with more than one Lok Sabha seat to have all woman MPs.

For that to happen, the NPP has to get the better of a Congress desperate to hold on to the Shillong constituency, the last of its bastions across the hill States of the Northeast, and retain the Tura seat.

But a bigger worry for the NPP, led by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, seems to be the Voice of the People Party (VPP), a new regional party that has seen a meteoric rise since its birth before the 2023 Assembly election.

Barring Assam, Lok Sabha seats have invariably been won by candidates of dominant political parties in the northeastern States, which have two parliamentary constituencies at most. This factor gives the NPP, a major ally of the BJP, an edge.

Chief Minister Conrad Sangma welcomes Masterchef India runner-up Nambie Jessica Marak in West Khasi Hills district. PTI

Months before the elections were announced, the NPP nominated Health Minister Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh and Agatha K. Sangma from the Shillong and Tura seats encompassing 36 and 24 Assembly segments, respectively.

A five-time MLA, Ms. Lyngdoh switched over from the Congress to the NPP ahead of the 2023 Assembly election.

Ms. Sangma is seeking her third term from Tura, a constituency that has been with her family since 1977 except for a two-year phase from 1989.

"There is a misconception that women call the shots in our matrilineal communities (Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia). They hardly wield political power and 'mandate 2024' could be an opportunity for women to raise their voices for us in Parliament," Eva Nongkhlaw, a self-employed woman, said.

Ms. Lyngdoh has sensed an opportunity in the "positive vibes" from women to her campaign. "No woman has ever represented Shillong in the Lok Sabha. Fulfilling their expectations will be a great challenge," she said. Apart from her Congress rival Vincent H. Pala, who seeks a fourth straight term, Ms. Lyngdoh faces Ricky Andrew J. Syngkon of the VPP and Robert June Kharjahrin of the United Democratic Party (UDP), the second largest party in the 60-member Meghalaya Assembly.

The VPP's brand of aggressive, community-based politics appears to have resonated across the Shillong seat, comprising the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The party has been noisier than the others, with the cry of "*ha u prah*" by its supporters gate-crashing the rallies of rival parties having been reported often.

Prah in the Khasi language means winnowing tray, the VPP's symbol. "We will separate the chaff from the grain," Mr. Syngkon said at one of the rallies, targeting the older parties. The aggression has not been lost on the Chief Minister.

"Some parties are pitting one community against the other in Meghalaya, whose Statehood was achieved by all communities together. Think of the post-election scenario to cast your vote," he said at an NPP rally.

While the Congress campaign for Mr. Pala has been uncharacteristically subdued, allegedly because of infighting, that of the NPP received a shot in the arm after the State BJP unit joined the canvassing. Local BJP leaders had initially threatened to not back the NPP as they were angry at the party's central leadership for deciding not to contest the Meghalaya seats for the sake of National Democratic Alliance .

For the NPP, the BJP's support is expected to be more crucial in Tura, which comprises the western half of Meghalaya. "Our State unit is trying to swing the campaign in favour of the NDA candidate Agatha Sangma," State BJP vice-president Bernard N. Marark said. He represents Tura town as a member of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council.

A strong govt. comes from pro-people policies: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A strong and stable government comes from policies and programmes that address concerns of the people, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has nothing to offer to farmers and the working class, the Congress said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters, party general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh hit out at Mr. Modi, who had said on Sunday at the launch of the BJP's manifesto that a "strong and stable government needs to be elected in an uncertain world".

"Such words were used in the run-up to the 2014 election but people saw through them. This election is to elect a strong and stable government, not for re-electing a demagogue," Mr. Ramesh said.

Jairam Ramesh

"A Prime Minister who has nothing to say on farmers' issues, nothing to say on unemployment, someone who refuses to talk about workers, social justice, and empowerment, is making a pitch for strong and capable government. The question is strong and capable for what?" asked Mr. Ramesh.

Asked to respond to how the BJP's manifesto talks about increasing investments, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Mr. Ramesh said that while private investment was 32% of the GDP during the Manmohan Singh government, it had come down to 28% under the present regime.

The Congress leader also said that his party's manifesto laid down the agenda for different sections and that had "rattled the Prime Minister who is using language that is unbecoming of a PM".

"These are all signs of a desperate and a nervous Prime Minister... We [Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance] will get a clear, convincing and beyond-doubt majority," Mr. Ramesh said.

The Congress communication chief asserted that he had just come back from an extensive election tour of the Northeast and there was a strong undercurrent for his party.

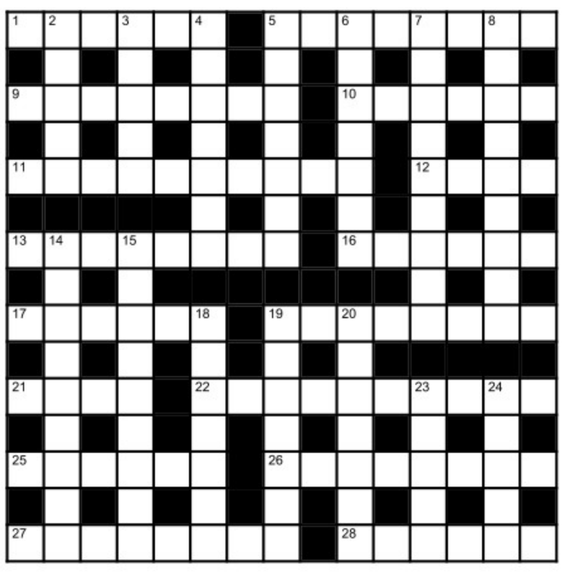
"So the most important issue in the Northeast is the preservation of religious diversity, linguistic diversity, food diversity.," Mr. Ramesh said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14150

(set by Pixie Dust)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Vacation from extremely remote duty (6)
5 Mope, having had enough at first - It's a phase! (4,4)
9 Designated spots for caregivers also accommodating chief doctor (8)
10 Get me a cracked egg! (6)
11 Surprisingly pretty pics of document (10)
12 Nobody like Mother Teresa, say (4)
13 Indian State's leading man, heartlessly torments social-climbers (8)
16 Passionate engineer dotes on her, bites off nose sadly! (3,3)
17 Tapestry of Hebrew Prophet (6)
19 Alternatively take cab around beginning of December to validate retrospectively (8)
21 Quit going back for containers (4)
22 Without break basically, tries to solve problems of bad weather conditions (10)
25 Fabric made from hairs of Mustang or Appaloosa (6)
26 Agent Bean at sea, loses inclination essentially, to surrender (8)
27 Prophet at church goes around street for a Roman coin (8)
28 One leg broken after trespass (6)

Down

2 In case of emergency, people turn to the opposition (5)
3 France, US, Nepal hold back issue (5)
4 Lothario, say, rescued for a change! (7)
5 Remains petrified, every second if boss is aimless? (7)
6 Less heavier match (7)
7 Reverend's tongue-tied and furious guardians! (3,3,3)
8 How's a donut perfect? (3,3,3)
14 She substitutes for woman at church, say! (9)
15 Rant about entertainment in ship (9)
18 Oh, My God! Special song for buccaneer (7)
19 Doctor's kidnapped by dangerous European Company (7)
20 Better places could always succeed in nurturing outstanding student leaders (7)
23 Mean agronomist has upset member (5)
24 Say, Iron Man and others (5)

SUDOKU

	7	4			2			1
			7	4				2
				5	1	9		
	9				3	6		
			5		8			
		7	2				9	
		6	8	1				
8				3	7			
7			6			4	5	

No.SS6130 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

	L		M		R		A		F		R		B	
V	I	S	I	T	O	R	S		O	P	E	R	A	S
	B		N		G		I		R		M		D	
C	I	R	C	L	E		A	R	T	F	U	L	L	Y
	D		E		T				H		D		Y	
C	O	M	P	O	S	E	R		E	T	A	L	O	N
			I		T		U		T				F	
T	A	K	E	T	H	E	S	H	I	N	E	O	F	F
	D					E		E		M		T		
G	L	O	B	E	S			S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D
	I		E		A				B		I		A	
O	B	S	T	R	U	C	T		E	B	O	A	T	S
	B		T		R		I		I		P		I	
D	E	T	E	N	U		P	O	N	T	I	F	F	S
	R		R		S		U		G		A		Y	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	6	8	4	1	5	9	7	3
5	1	9	2	3	7	4	8	6
4	3	7	9	8	6	2	5	1
3	8	2	6	4	1	5	9	7
1	7	4	5	9	2	6	3	8
6	9	5	3	7	8	1	4	2
8	2	3	1	5	4	7	6	9
9	5	1	7	6	3	8	2	4
7	4	6	8	2	9	3	1	5

FAITH

Rama and Bharata meet

Bharata sets out for the forest, with Sumantra, Shatrugna and the four queens of Dasaratha. He wants to seek forgiveness for Kaikeyi's deeds. Bharata too now has matted locks, and is attired in a garment made of tree bark. If Rama is dressed in this manner, Bharata is determined to be dressed in that way too, said Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar in a discourse. He does not want to enjoy the luxuries of palace life, when these have been denied to Rama. Rama tells Bharata that he should not have come to the forest, when Dasaratha is in Ayodhya. He asks Bharata if he serves the nation as he should.

Rama says that Dasaratha has always been a righteous king, a man of his word, and one who has performed yagas prescribed for kings. He hopes Bharata is reverential towards the preceptor of the royal family. He makes enquiries about Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi. Rama asks if Bharata has shown respect due to ancestors and gods. He says Bharata should have ministers who understand governance and administration. Bharata should not make decisions without consultation. He must evaluate the cost of an undertaking, and make sure the benefits are worth the expense. Rama talks to Bharata about the duties of a king, because He does not yet know of Dasaratha's demise.

INBRIEF

Byju's Raveendran to oversee company as CEO Mohan quits

Byju's founder Byju Raveendran will return to spearhead the daily operations of the edtech firm after CEO Arjun Mohan's transition to an external advisory role, the company said. Over the past four years, Mr. Raveendran had focused primarily on strategic aspects. Recognising the need for a strong leadership during this "challenging hour," he would now be deeply involved in the company's day-to-day functioning, Byju's said in a release.

Govt. rules out permitting sugar exports this season

The government on Monday ruled out possibility of allowing sugar exports in the current 2023-24 season ending October, the industry's persistent demand notwithstanding. Currently, there are curbs on export of sugar for an indefinite period. However, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) has requested the government to allow export of 10 lakh tonne of sugar in the 2023-24 season, anticipating healthy closing stock by the season-end. PTI

Ramkrishna Forgings bags ₹270-cr. Vande Bharat order

Ramkrishna Forgings Ltd. (RKFL) on Monday said it had received an order of ₹270 crore from a consortium led by BHEL to supply bogie frames of Vande Bharat train sets. The scope of the project involves the development and validation of the bogie frames for the sleeper version of the Vande Bharat train sets, RKFL said. The order encompasses 32 train sets, each comprising 16 coaches and RKFL will be producing a total of 1,024 bogie frames, the company said. PTI

March wholesale price inflation quickens to 3-month high of 0.53%

Global spikes in crude oil and commodity prices, and summer heat waves could accelerate the pace of inflation at the wholesale level in this quarter, say economists; the food index logged inflation of 4.65% last month led by cereal prices

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Food price pressures

The food index in the WPI rose 4.65% last month led by cereal prices, which surged at a 12-month high pace of 9.04%

- March wholesale inflation accelerated in paddy (11.7%), potato (53%) and onions (57%)
- Inflation in pulses and vegetables stayed elevated at 17.2% and 19.5%, respectively

Month-on-month, the WPI rose 0.4% - the first uptick in four months

Wholesale price inflation quickened to a three-month high of 0.53% in March, from February's 0.2%, with the food index rising 4.65%, led by cereal prices surging at a 12-month high pace of 9.04%, even as inflation in paddy (11.7%), potato (53%) and onions (57%) accelerated.

Inflation in pulses and vegetables stayed elevated at 17.2% and 19.5%, respectively, as per the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).

Fuel and power, as well as manufactured products, continued to be in deflation mode, though the level of price declines narrowed to about -0.8% for both categories in March.

Month-on-month, the WPI rose 0.4% – the first uptick in four months, with the food index up 1.01% and primary articles rising 0.9%. Manufactured products and fuel and power saw gains of 0.21% and 0.06%, respectively.

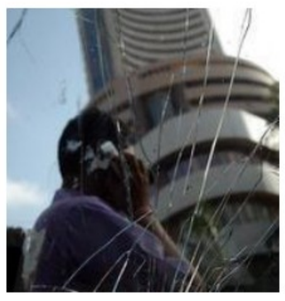
Within food articles, there was some relief from eggs, meat and fish, whose prices shrank 1.86%. This was in contrast to retail prices, which rose more than 10% for eggs, and over 6% for meat and fish, last month. Milk inflation eased to 4.7%, from February's 5.5%, but the pace of price rise in wheat accelerated sharply from 2.34% in February, to 7.43%.

For the full year, wholesale prices logged deflation, averaging -0.7%.

"International commodity prices are showing signs of increased pressure," said Bank of Baroda economist Sonal Badhan. "Going ahead, continued escalation in international crude oil prices, heat wave conditions impacting electricity demand and vegetable inflation, remain key causes of concern," she added.

Sensex slides over 1% in the wake of West Asia tensions

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI



Shares slumped on Monday in the wake of the flare-up in geopolitical tensions in West Asia over the weekend. The S&P BSE Sensex fell 845.12 points, or 1.14%, to 73,399.78 led by IT and financial stocks.

Only three of the 30 Sensex counters ended in the green with the losses led by Wipro (2.47%), Bajaj Finserv (2.40%), ICICI Bank (2.30%), L&T (2.10%), Bajaj Finance (2.09%) and Tata Motors (1.93%).

The NSE Nifty-50 index too fell 1.1% to 22,272.50.

"Market indices traded lower, influenced by the heightened tensions between Iran and Israel, leading to losses across all 13 major sectors," said Suman Bannerjee, Chief Investment Officer (CIO) at the Paris-based alternative investment firm Hedonova.

"Notably, the broader small- and mid-cap segments saw declines of about 3% and 2%, respectively. Given these developments, it is advisable for investors to closely monitor geopolitical events and their potential impact on global markets as trading resumes," he added.

Naveen Kulkarni, CIO, Axis Securities PMS said: "Geopolitical tensions and inflationary headwinds in the Western world have led to pressure on equity markets worldwide."

"While India is relatively better placed, higher crude oil prices are a significant dampener," Mr. Kulkarni added.

Vodafone Idea eyes ₹45,000 cr. capex, to raise ₹18,000 cr. via FPO

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL) will have a capex of about ₹45,000 crore, of which it aims to raise ₹18,000 crore via a follow-on public offer (FPO) within a week and raise debt of another ₹25,000 crore, CEO Akshaya Moondra said.

"VI is committed to continually enhancing its network infrastructure to meet the growing demand for data connectivity and providing 5G technology to customers, and aims to cover 40% of existing revenues in the 24 to 30 months post funding," Mr. Moondra, said, addressing a press conference.

'Focused investments'

He said the company would look at maintaining a focused investment strategy and aim to enhance its competitiveness in 17 key service coverage areas, which together contributed 97.4%, 97.8%, 98.0% and 98.2% of revenue from operations during the financial years 2021, 2022 and 2023 and the nine months ended December 31, 2023, respectively.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	73,400	-1.14
US Dollar	83.44	-0.07
Gold	73,050	-0.40
Brent oil	89.17	—

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3147.45	-62.45
Adani Ports	1315.55	-28.65
Apollo Hosp	6303.15	-103.40
Asian Paints	2844.40	-10.10
Axis Bank	1057.95	-15.50
Bajaj Auto	8997.05	-67.80
Bajaj Finserv	1656.85	-41.80
Bajaj Finance	7076.25	-153.30
Bharti Airtel	1224.55	-1.00
BPCL	589.55	-11.65
Britannia Ind	4761.90	10.15
Cipla	1381.40	-15.40
Coal India	451.00	-4.60
Divis Lab	3716.55	-63.15
Dr Reddys Lab	6010.85	-73.00
Eicher Motors	4219.35	-82.90
Grasim Ind	2237.40	-16.65
HCL Tech	1505.05	-16.45
HDFC Bank	1494.70	-24.25
HDFC Life	612.95	-5.55
Hero MotoCorp	4381.20	-59.60
Hindalco	612.70	14.05
Hind Unilever	2194.05	-38.25
ICICI Bank	1078.35	-26.05
IndusInd Bank	1539.90	-15.75
Infosys	1468.15	-16.60
ITC	425.90	-4.20
JSW Steel	860.45	-6.00
Kotak Bank	1798.15	-14.90
L&T	3600.80	-78.45
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4815.15	-73.75
M&M	2053.45	-17.50
Maruti Suzuki	12422.85	156.30
NestleIndia	2553.65	17.45
NTPC	361.15	-0.60
ONGC	279.85	14.15
PowerGrid Corp	274.05	-1.20
Reliance Ind	2929.65	-4.65
SBI Life	1466.90	-26.25
State Bank	757.50	-8.80
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2414.65	-70.95
Sun Pharma	1540.05	0.05
TataConsumerProduct	1130.65	-18.80
Tata Motors	998.80	-19.70
Tata Steel	160.85	-2.65
TCS	3941.20	-60.20
Tech Mahindra	1218.75	-23.35
Titan	3600.60	-18.70
UltraTech Cement	9506.25	-146.30
Wipro	459.35	-11.40

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 15

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.25	83.57
Euro	88.74	89.08
British Pound	104.00	104.40
Japanese Yen (100)	54.09	54.30
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.55
Swiss Franc	91.19	91.55
Singapore Dollar	61.19	61.42
Canadian Dollar	60.58	60.82
Malaysian Ringitt	17.41	17.49
Australian Dollar	53.97	54.19

Source:Indian Bank

Ambuja to buy My Home T.N. grinding unit for ₹414 crore

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Ambuja Cements on Monday said it will acquire My Home Group's cement grinding unit at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu for a total value of ₹413.75 crore.

The company – a part of the Adani Group – has signed a definitive agreement to acquire the cement grinding unit of the My Home Group, which has a capacity of 1.5 mtpa, Ambuja Cements said.

"The acquisition estimated at a total value of ₹413.75 crore through internal accruals will aid in enhancing the coastal footprint across southern markets of Tamil Nadu and Kerala," it added. The total cement capacity of Adani Group stands at 78.9 mtpa.

There is space for everyone in market: Asian Paints MD

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Amit Syngle

The entry of new players into the paints industry will not impact market leader Asian Paints and it has never been worried on this count, MD & CEO Amit Syngle said in an interview.

"Several new and international players have been coming into the market for a long time," said Mr. Syngle. "We feel the market is very big as per-capita consumption in India is very low compared with the western world.

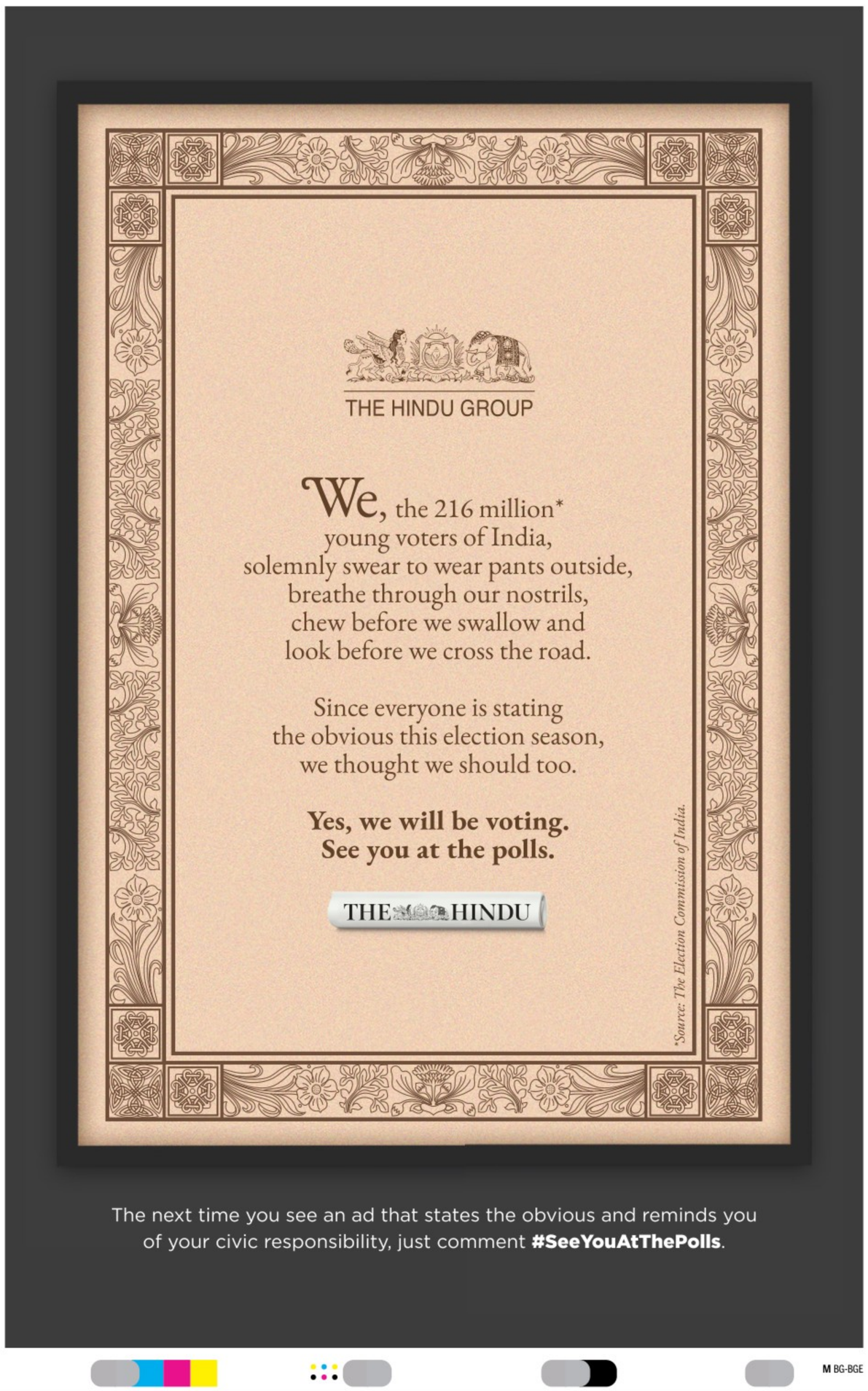
"So I think there is enough space for everyone. The paints market has been growing at almost 10-12% CAGR every year and what we feel is given the strength of Asian Paints, the brand, supply and distribution strength and the kind of innovations we have brought in into products and services, we think our strengths are very strong enough to keep us forging ahead. Therefore we are not worried about any new competition in the market."

He was responding to a question on the impact of the entry of JSW Paints and Aditya Birla group's Opus Paints into the market. The Birlas are investing more than ₹10,000 crore and aim to make a significant mark in the business.

Asian Paints, which has a market share of about 60%, introduced Neo Bharat Latex Paint targeted at rural markets. This new category would address a market estimated at ₹4,500 crore and currently catered to by distempers and unorganised players. This range is expected to add 1% to the firm's overall market share, he said.

'Affordable' pricing

Priced 'affordably,' it would cost about ₹5,000 to paint a 'two-room set,' including paint and labour. The Neo Bharat Latex Paint range offers more than 1,000 shades. "We are revolutionising the industry by introducing a completely new category, making it more accessible to consumers across India," added Mr. Syngle.



Country poised to be a global hospitality leader: Hyatt India

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Sunjae Sharma

India's hospitality sector will witness better growth than the rest of the world over the next seven years said Sunjae Sharma, MD, India, at Hyatt India.

"These are indeed promising times, and I foresee substantial growth over the next five to seven years, with India emerging as a global player in the hospitality industry," Mr. Sharma told *The Hindu*.

The country's economic growth has been fuelling expansion of its luxury hospitality market. Unique destinations in the country were increasingly drawing international luxury leisure travelers, and a fast-growing domestic market with the rise in high-net-worth individuals, he said.

Mr. Sharma said government initiatives like Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD, and campaigns like Dekho Apna Desh have enhanced infrastructure and spotlighted lesser-known destinations.

'Bleisure' (business and leisure) travel remains prominent, as professionals blend work trips with leisure, extending stays for exploration. Shorter getaways during long weekends are rising, along with a demand for immersive experiences that connect travelers with local culture. Slow travel and spiritual tourism are also gaining traction, reflecting a shift towards personal growth and Gen Zs are prioritising experiences over possessions, he said.

Tesla said to scout for India showroom locations

Reuters
NEW DELHI

U.S. electric carmaker Tesla is looking at potential showroom locations in New Delhi and Mumbai ahead of plans to begin sales in India later this year, two people familiar with the discussions said.

Tesla, which saw its global vehicle deliveries dip in the first quarter for the first time in almost four years, wants to begin with a showroom of 3,000 to 5,000 square feet as well as a service hub in each city, said one of the people.

SINGAPORE

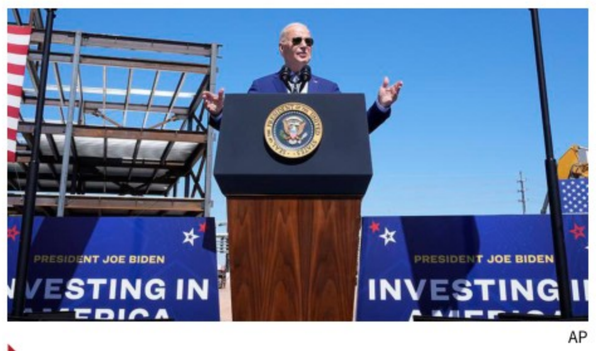
Singapore PM Lee to step down, deputy to take over next month

AFP

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Monday that he will step down on May 15 after two decades at the helm, and hand power to his deputy Lawrence Wong. Mr. Lee, 72, will formally advise the President to appoint Mr. Wong, who is currently Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, to succeed him. AP

WASHINGTON

Biden govt. to grant Samsung up to $6.4 billion for chip plants



AP

The U.S. announced on Monday grants of up to $6.4 billion to South Korean semiconductor giant Samsung to produce cutting-edge chips in Texas. The award is the latest from the Biden government as it looks to cement its lead in the chip industry both on national security grounds and also in the face of competition with China. AFP

MANILA

Marcos rules out giving U.S. access to more Philippine military bases

AFP

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos said on Monday the U.S. would not be given access to more Philippine military bases. Manila, which is crucial for the U.S. to counter China, expanded a 2014 agreement last year to give U.S. military access to another four military bases in the country, taking the total number to nine. AFP

UNITED STATES

'Crimes against humanity' may have happened in Sudan: UN chief

REUTERS

Indiscriminate attacks against civilians in Sudan could constitute "war crimes and crimes against humanity," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday, one year since unrest began in the country. He also reiterated concerns about unrest in El-Fasher, in Darfur where mass ethnic-based killings were reported. AFP

Four Israeli troops injured in Hezbollah attack

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Lebanon's Hezbollah said on Monday it had detonated "explosive devices" targeting Israeli soldiers who the group said had crossed into Lebanese territory.

Israel's Army said four soldiers were wounded overnight in an explosion "in the area of the northern border". One of the soldiers was "severely injured" it said.

It was the first time Hezbollah claimed such an attack in six months of near daily cross-border clashes between the Iran-backed group and Israel since the Gaza war broke out.

Hezbollah fighters "planted explosive devices in the Tal Ismail area" inside Lebanon.

The violence flaring between Israel and Hezbollah has largely been contained to the border area. It has killed at least 364 people in Lebanon, mostly Hezbollah fighters but also including at least 70 civilians.

Israeli military chief vows response to Iranian attack

Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi says Tel Aviv is still considering its steps during a visit to an air base that suffered light damage in the strikes; U.S. says it is not involved in Israel's decision making process

Associated Press
JERUSALEM

Israel's military chief said on Monday that Israel will respond to Iran's weekend missile strike, but did not immediately elaborate on when and how.

Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi said that Israel is still considering its steps, but he said that the Iranian strike of missiles and attack drones "will be met with a response." Mr. Halevi spoke during a visit to the Nevatim air base, which Israel says suffered light damage in the Iranian attack.

Mock drill: Israeli soldiers lift a drone near the border with the Gaza Strip on Monday in Southern Israel. GETTY IMAGES

World leaders' plea

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been huddling with top officials to discuss a possible response to Iran's attack involving hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.

World leaders have been urging Israel not to retaliate.

The Iranian attack on Saturday marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The attack happened less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building.

The Israeli military says that 99% of the drones and missiles launched by Iran were intercepted, with the help of other countries including the United States, Britain and France.

Despite the reported interceptions, Iran has called the attack a success.

'Let Israelis speak'

In Washington, U.S. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby declined to say whether the U.S. had been or expects to be briefed on any Israeli response plans. "We will let the Israelis speak to that," he told reporters on Monday.

"We are not involved in their decision-making process about a potential response," Mr. Kirby said.

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's six-month war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip.

The war erupted after Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a devastating cross-border attack on October 7 that killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others.

Israel lost deterrence, Jewish terrorist violence spreading, says former PM Yair Lapid

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel's Opposition leader Yair Lapid on Monday accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of leading to a "total loss of Israeli deterrence" in the wake of an unprecedented Iranian attack.

In a scathing criticism posted on X, former Premier Mr. Lapid also said that under Mr. Netanyahu, "Jewish terrorist violence" against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank was "out of control".

Mr. Netanyahu, who returned to power in 2022 at the helm of a coalition with far-right parties, has brought "heaps of destruction from Beeri to Kiryat Shmona", Mr. Lapid said, calling for early elections.

Beeri, a kibbutz community near the Gaza border, came under attack when Hamas militants stormed the area on October 7, triggering the ongoing war, while the northern town of Kiryat Shmona has suffered during months of cross-border fire between Israeli forces and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Yair Lapid

Mr. Lapid's remarks came two days after Iran's attack on Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu's Cabinet has weighed Israel's response to the Iranian attack, but the Prime Minister has not made any public comments.

In the West Bank, where violence has soared since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, Israeli settlers torched Palestinian homes and cars over the weekend, killing at least two persons, after an Israeli teen was "murdered in a suspected terrorist attack", according to the Israeli military.

Pointing to surging "terrorist" settler attacks, Mr. Lapid said: "If we don't move this government, it will bring destruction upon us."

The government, which includes hardline settlers, has prioritised Jewish settlement expansion in the West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967.

Mr. Netanyahu has faced in recent months mass protests over the fate of hostages held in Gaza and pressure from a resurgent anti-government movement.

The Prime Minister's Likud party responded to Mr. Lapid in a statement stressing Mr. Netanyahu's part in "the global campaign" to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons – which Tehran denies it is seeking.

Bishop among four stabbed at church service in Australia

Associated Press
SYDNEY

The police in Australia say a man has been arrested after a bishop and three churchgoers were stabbed in Sydney. There are no life-threatening injuries.

It occurred during a televised service at the church on Monday evening, the police said.

Repeated stabs

A video on social media shows a man dressed in black approaching a cleric at the altar identified as the bishop at Christ the Good Shepherd in suburban Wakely and appearing to stab him repeatedly in the head and upper body.

Australians are still in shock after a man stabbed six persons to death in a Sydney shopping mall

NSW Ambulance service said it had treated a man in his 50s for multiple cuts and taken him to a hospital, and three others were treated for one or more cuts at the scene.

Australians are still in shock after a lone assailant stabbed six persons to death in a busy Sydney shopping mall on Saturday and injured more than a dozen others. There was no indication the two stabbings were linked.

Setting the Olympics stage

Actress Mary Mina, playing a priestess, lights the flame during the final dress rehearsal of the flame lighting ceremony for the Paris Olympics at the Ancient Olympia site in Greece on Monday. The flame for the Paris Olympics will be officially lit today. AP

Myanmar rocket attack kills 4, injures military cadets

Agence France-Presse
YANGON

A rocket attack by Myanmar anti-coup fighters killed four persons and wounded 12, including cadets from the military's elite officer academy, junta officials said on Monday.

Myanmar's military authorities, who are struggling to maintain their grip on the country in the face of rising armed opposition, condemned the attack in the central town of Pyin Oo Lwin as targeting civilians.

Myanmar is mired in conflict as the military, which seized power in a 2021 coup, battles multiple armed resistance groups across the country, suffering heavy losses in recent months.

Fighters from a local "people's defence force" (PDF) – armed groups of pro-democracy civilians that have risen up to battle the Army – "randomly shot" 11 rockets on Sunday evening, hitting a hospital, monastery and hotel, the junta said.

The dead include two monks, it said.

Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun confirmed three cadets from a military academy were wounded in the attack.

A spokesman for Mandalay PDF said its fighters carried out the attack, saying they targeted only the academy.

Taliban 'committed' to protecting rights of Hindus, Sikhs

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

The Taliban is in "continuous contact" with the Hindus and Sikhs of Afghanistan who were forced to flee and had their homes taken by warlords, said a senior official of the outfit's 'Justice Ministry' on Monday. In a written statement to *The Hindu*, the representative said the Taliban will respect the property rights of the minority communities of Afghanistan and that they are "particularly committed" to defending the rights of Hindus and Sikhs in the country.

"The technical boards for the identification and verification of usurped lands under the supervision of the commission in the centre and provinces are in continuous contact with the Hindus and Sikh compatriots whose lands have been usurped," said Hafez Barakatullah Rasuli, spokesperson of the Taliban's 'Justice Ministry'. Mr. Rasuli said the properties will be restored to the members of the Hindu and Sikh communities after "identification and verification" of their claims.

The head of the Taliban's political wing, Suhail Shaheen, had told *The Hindu* last week that the outfit had constituted a commission with 'Justice Minister' Abdul Hakim Sharaee to restore property to the members of the two minority communities who were deprived of their homes and businesses by strongmen during the previous decades. An announcement was also made at this time informing that Narender Singh Khalsa, a former member of parliament in Kabul, had returned from Canada to Afghanistan after the Taliban had assured him that his rights would be respected.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is committed to ensure the rights of religious minorities, particularly Hindus and Sikhs in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia. The Islamic Hanafi jurisprudence has detailed provisions regarding the rights of religious minorities and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is committed and determined to protect those rights," Mr. Rasuli said.

He added that a large delegation of the Hindus and Sikhs of Afghanistan held a meeting with 'Justice Minister' Sharaee a month ago in which the delegation kept their demands before the Taliban administration.

Randhir Jaiswal, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs here, had said last week that India considered the latest decision by the Taliban on restoring property to the minority communities a "positive development".

The Taliban maintain that Hindus and Sikhs played a crucial role in maintaining commercial ties of the country with the region and that they served a unique purpose in the urban centres of Afghanistan till the 1980s when the political disturbances began to impact them adversely prompting them to immigrate.

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

National Eligibility cum Entrance Test – Post Graduate (NEET - PG) 2024

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next NEET-PG on 23rd June 2024.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website https://natboard.edu.in for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates	
Availability of Information Bulletin	16th April 2024 onwards
Online Submission of the Application Form	16th April 2024 (3 PM Onwards) to 6th May 2024 (Till 11:55 PM)
Date of Examination	23rd June 2024
Declaration of the Result	By 15th July 2024

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333
- Helpline Portal on applicant login page
- Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

THE TARGET

We're setting up to get that '300' soon, says Sunrisers' Head

K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Not satisfied with the record-breaking 287 against RCB, SRH opener Travis Head said his side aims to breach the 300-run mark soon. "Our team scores need a '3' in the front now (300). Pat (Cummins) and Dan (Vettori) put pressure on the batting line-up to make sure we keep going. We're setting up well to get to that score," Head said.

(IM)POSSIBLE!

SRH overhauls its own highest total, game sees record aggregate

K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Sunrisers' 287 for three against Royal Challengers is the highest total in IPL history, eclipsing its own record of 277 for three scored against Mumbai Indians earlier this season. The match aggregate of 549 (RCB scored 262/7) is the highest in any men's T20, again overhauling the record set in the SRH-MI clash (523).

ALL OVER THE PARK

A record-equalling 81 boundaries scored in the SRH-RCB game

K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

The 81 boundaries recorded in the SRH-RCB match is the joint highest for a T20 match, equalling the tally witnessed in the West Indies-South Africa game at Centurion in 2023. The 38 sixes scored on Monday is also the joint-most in a T20, matching the record set in the SRH-MI game at Hyderabad this season.

SPIRITED CHASE

Royal Challengers' 262 in the second innings an IPL record

K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 262 for seven, in pursuit of Sunrisers Hyderabad's mammoth 287 for three, is the highest score in the IPL for a team batting second. The previous best was the 246 for five scored by Mumbai Indians against Sunrisers in Hyderabad this season.

Red-hot Sunrisers outshine Royal Challengers

Head leads the way with a blistering knock before Klaasen unleashes his range of shots; the Hyderabad side finishes with 287, a new mark; Karthik's blitz takes Bengaluru to 262

IPL-17

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

By going all guns blazing from start to finish, Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) set the perfect template for modern-day T20 cricket.

In the process, SRH broke records galore as it buried Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) under a mountain of runs at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Monday.

With a hail of sixes and fours in a mammoth 287 for three, SRH posted the highest ever total in IPL history, going past its own 277 for three earlier in the season.

Second highest

This was also the second highest total in all T20s, behind Nepal's 314 for three versus Mongolia.

The visitor also hit the most sixes (22) in an IPL essay – an apt indicator of an assault without conscience.

Opener Travis Head (102, 41b, 9x4, 8x6) set the ball rolling with the fourth fastest IPL century. Head, who incidentally made his IPL debut with RCB in 2016, swung freely through the line.

Smash hit: While Head's heroics powered Sunrisers to a record total, Karthik's onslaught propelled Royal Challengers to a new high for a chasing team. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Head and Abhishek Sharma (34, 22b, 2x4, 2x6) smashed 76 in the Power-Play. There was no respite for RCB when Abhishek was sent back in the ninth over, as another power-hitter in Heinrich Klaasen walked in. That Klaasen (67, 31b, 2x4, 7x6) was promoted up the order to do even greater damage spoke volumes about SRH's unrelenting approach.

As the Hyderabad outfit went hammer and tongs, the RCB attack resembled deer in the headlights. The bowlers had no idea how to grab even the odd dot ball, offering overpitched dollies and long hops.

Aiden Markram (32 n.o., 17b, 2x4, 2x6) and Abdul Samad (37 n.o., 10b, 4x4, 3x6) helped themselves to the buffet in the death.

To its credit, RCB made a sparkling start to the chase. Virat Kohli (42, 20b, 6x4, 2x6) and Faf du Plessis (62, 28b, 7x4, 4x6), emboldened in the knowledge that there was no point in fiddling around, powered the side to 79 for no loss in six overs.

SRH, aware that Kohli doesn't have a good record against wrist spin, brought Impact Player Mayank Markande into the attack.

Kohli alarmingly fell to a googly once again, completely missing an attempted slog sweep.

RCB was out of the race in the 10th over, when du Plessis was deceived by a slow bouncer from SRH skipper Pat Cummins.

Dinesh Karthik (83, 35b, 5x4, 7x6) kept the crowd happy with some lusty blows, but there was no preventing RCB from slipping to a fifth straight loss.

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Abhishek Sharma c Ferguson b Topley 34 *(22b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Travis Head c du Plessis b Ferguson 102 *(41b, 9x4, 8x6)*, Heinrich Klaasen c Vyshak b Ferguson 67 *(31b, 2x4, 7x6)*, Aiden Markram (not out) 32 *(17b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Abdul Samad (not out) 37 *(10b, 4x4, 3x6)*; Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-12): 15; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 287.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-108 (Abhishek, 8.1 overs), 2-165 (Head, 12.3), 3-231 (Klaasen, 16.6).

RCB BOWLING
Jacks 3-0-32-0, Topley 4-0-68-1, Dayal 4-0-51-0, Ferguson 4-0-52-2, Vyshak 4-0-64-0, Lomror 1-0-18-0.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Virat Kohli b Markande 42 *(20b, 6x4, 2x6)*, Faf du Plessis c Klaasen b Cummins 62 *(28b, 7x4, 4x6)*, Will Jacks run out 7 *(4b, 1x4)*, Rajat Patidar c Nitish b Markande 9 *(5b, 1x6)*, Saurav Chauhan lbw b Cummins 0 *(1b)*, Dinesh Karthik c Klaasen b Natarajan 83 *(35b, 5x4, 7x6)*, Mahipal Lomror b Cummins 19 *(11b, 2x6)*, Anuj Rawat (**Impact Player in place of Dayal**) (not out) 25 *(14b, 5x4)*, V. Vyshak (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (b-1, w-13): 14; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 262.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-80 (Kohli, 6.2), 2-100 (Jacks, 7.6), 3-111 (Patidar, 8.6), 4-121 (du Plessis, 9.3), 5-122 (Chauhan, 9.6), 6-181 (Lomror, 14.1), 7-244 (Karthik, 18.5).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Abhishek 1-0-10-0, Bhuvneshwar 4-0-60-0, Shahbaz 1-0-18-0, Natarajan 4-0-47-1, Cummins 4-0-43-3, Markande (**Impact Player in place of Head**) 4-0-46-2, Unadkat 2-0-37-0.

Toss: RCB; **PoM:** Head.
SRH won by 25 runs.

Next assignment

SRH: April 20 vs **DC**
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

RCB: April 21 vs **KKR**
Kolkata, 3.30 p.m.

Formidable Knight Riders look to unsettle Royals

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOLKATA

On Tuesday night, at one of cricket's most iconic grounds, two teams in top form come face to face. It should be a fascinating battle in the IPL between Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals at the Eden Gardens.

Royals are sitting atop the table with five wins from six games while Knight Riders, which has four wins from five, must be keenly eyeing that spot.

After crushing Lucknow Super Giants by eight wickets with plenty to spare at the same venue, the host is indeed looking formidable.

RR landed in this historic metropolis after winning its last match, though it was a much closer encounter against Punjab Kings.

Sanju Samsmon's men had won that match without two of their most experienced stars, Jos Buttler and R. Ashwin. The team's star of the season, Riyan Parag, had a relatively quiet game too, but Shimron Hetmyer steered the side home with a 10-ball 27 not out. Such has been Royals' batting depth.

While Parag and Samson are among the leading run-scorers, Yuzvendra Chahal has worn the purple cap for much of the season.

Ready to slug it out: Hetmyer can turn a contest on its head with his pyrotechnics. PTI

The wrist-spinner though has to bowl against an explosive batting line-up which has the likes of Phil Salt, fresh from his 47-ball unbeaten 89 against LSG, Andre Russell, skipper Shreyas Iyer and Sunil Narine.

Narine has also been effective with the ball. Mitchell Starc must be raring to go too, after his three-wicket haul – two of them came in the final over – on Sunday.

Today's match

KKR vs. RR

Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 27
KKR 14 | RR 13

PREVIOUS MEETING
RR won by nine wickets, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

My focus is on how I can win matches for my team: Parag

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOLKATA

Riyan Parag may or may not be in the selectors' radar for the T20 World Cup, but the very fact that it is being speculated upon tells a lot about the metamorphosis he has undergone.

Parag has been one of this IPL's brightest stars. He has hit 284 runs at an average of 71 and a strike-rate of 155.19.

His consistency at No. 4 has been one of the reasons behind Rajasthan Royals' place at the top of the table.

"I have been contributing a lot to the team, and that is what I have been trying to do for the last few years, but it didn't click, this time it has," said Parag at a press conference ahead of Royals' match against Kolkata Knight Riders.

About a possible place in the World Cup squad, he said he wasn't thinking about it. "If you had told me this last year that I would be in this position, I would not have believed you."

He said the main goal was to help Royals win the IPL. "My focus is on how I can win matches for my team," he said. "We haven't won the IPL for a long time - that is the main goal."

Staying in the present: Parag is not thinking too far ahead and wants to make the most of his good form. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	6	5	1	10	0.767
Kolkata Knight Riders	5	4	1	8	1.688
Chennai Super Kings	6	4	2	8	0.726
Sunrisers Hyderabad	6	4	2	8	0.502
Lucknow Super Giants	6	3	3	6	0.038
Gujarat Titans	6	3	3	6	-0.637
Punjab Kings	6	2	4	4	-0.218
Mumbai Indians	6	2	4	4	-0.234
Delhi Capitals	6	2	4	4	-0.975
Royal Challengers	7	1	6	2	-1.185

Deshpande, Shardul unsung heroes: Simons

Putting the skids: Simons feels the overs bowled by Deshpande and Shardul in the middle phase swung it for CSK. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Matheesha Pathirana may have run out with a bagful of wickets to ensure Chennai Super Kings defended 206 without much sweat against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium.

As much as Pathirana, CSK bowling coach Eric Simons credited Mumbai's pace duo of Shardul Thakur and Tushar Deshpande for their outstanding bowling effort.

Impact points

"The unsung heroes tonight were Tushar and Shardul. Shardul bowled one of the best overs I have ever seen. We talk about execution; you have got to look at the impact points in that over when he went for two runs.

The whole game turns at that moment. At that stage they were looking at 12s-13s an over, the game's very much in the balance. He bowls the over and it goes up at 14. The game turned there," Simons said after the game at the Wankhede Stadium.

While Shardul conceded just two runs in the 14th over, Deshpande followed it up with one that went for just three runs. He picked up a wicket too and shut the door on Hardik & Co.

"Matheesha will get a lot of accolades and he deserves it because of the way he bowled and the breakthroughs he gave us. But those two gentlemen did extremely well for us to push the rate out of reach out of MI."

INBRIEF

Harmanpreet to lead India in Bangladesh T20Is

Harmanpreet Kaur will lead India in the upcoming T20I tour of Bangladesh.

The squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-capt.), Shafali Verma, D. Hemalatha, Sajana Sajeevan, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia (wk), Radha Yadav, Deepti Sharma, Pooja Vastrakar, Amanjot Kaur, Shreyanka Patil, Saika Ishaque, Asha Sobhana, Renuka Singh, and Titas Sadhu.
The schedule: April 28 and 30 (6 p.m.); May 2 and 6 (1.30 p.m.), and May 9 (6 p.m.). All matches at Sylhet, all times IST.

Bagan beats Mumbai, wins ISL League Winner's Shield

Mohun Bagan SG weathered a late resurgence from Mumbai City FC to win 2-1 in the final league fixture of ISL-10 and claim its maiden League Winner's Shield in Kolkata on Monday. Bagan has earned a ticket to the AFC Champions League's tier two.

The result: Mohun Bagan SG 2 (Colaco 28, Cummings 80) bt Mumbai City FC 1 (Chhangte 89).

Returning Nadal wants to enjoy comeback 'gift'

Rafael Nadal said on Monday that returning to action at the Barcelona Open is a "gift" and he wants to enjoy every moment of what he expects to be the last year of his career. The 22-time Grand Slam winner will face Flavio Cobolli on Tuesday in the first round. "More than lamenting where I wasn't able to be, I prefer to be happy that I am here," Nadal told a news conference.

Alekna breaks 38-year-old discus World record

Mykolas Alekna broke the longest-standing World record in men's athletics on Sunday, producing a mammoth 74.35m discus throw to shatter the nearly 38-year-old previous best mark. It bettered Jurgen Schult's mark of 74.08m set on June 6, 1986 while representing East Germany. The 21-year-old Lithuanian broke the record at the Oklahoma Throws Series World Invitational in Ramona (USA). Until Sunday, Schult's 1986 mark had been the longest-standing men's World record in athletics, eclipsing the one of 25 years and 79 days held by Jesse Owens for long jump.

Indian Greco-Roman wrestlers disappoint

Indian Greco-Roman wrestlers disappointed in the Asian championships at Bishkek on Monday. Sajan (77kg), who beat Singapore's Gadiel Misso 9-0 but lost to Iran's Amir Ali Abdi 8-0 in the quarterfinals before exiting the medal race, was the best performer. It was also the end for Arjun Halakurki (55kg), Umesh (63kg), Ajay (87kg) and Mehar Singh (130kg) after they lost in the first round.

Daruvala scores first Formula E points at Misano

India's Jehan Daruvala had a breakthrough at the 2024 Misano ePrix Formula E race when he finished ninth and scored his first points in the second race on Sunday. The Indian, driving for Maserati MSG Racing failed to score points in the first four rounds of the season. "It feels nice to have my first points for the team," said Daruvala.

Gujrathi punishes Nakamura for inaccurate moves

The stalemate between Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa keeps the former in the joint lead with Nepomniachtchi; Humpy shares the honours while Vaishali suffers a reverse

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sports Bureau

The clash between the two Chennai-based teenagers, D. Gukesh and R. Praggnanandhaa, ended in a draw, but the other Indian, Vidit Gujrathi shocked second seed Hikaru Nakamura of the United States in the ninth round of the Candidates chess tournament at Toronto on Sunday.

Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi, the winner of the last editions, was held by Alireza Firouzja of France and that left the Russian retaining the joint lead along with Gukesh; they are on 5.5 points.

With five rounds to go, Praggnanandhaa is in the sole third position with five points. He is followed half-a-point behind, though, by Nakamura, Gujrathi and the top-seeded American Fabiano Caruana, who was held by Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov, the lowest-rated player in the field.

Tan back in sole lead

In the women's tournament, China's Tan Zhongyi returned to the sole lead position after defeating R. Vaishali, who suffered her fourth consecutive loss.

Koneru Humpy drew with Russian Kateryna Lagno and is on four points and Vaishali on 2.5.

The leader Tan has six points.

Half-a-point behind her are compatriot Lei Tingjie, who drew with Nurgyul Salimova of Bulgaria, and Russian Aleksandra Gorychkina, who split the point with Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk.

It was Gujrathi's second victory in the tournament against Nakamura, who was punished for his inaccurate moves.

The American, who had black pieces, resigned on the 36th move, faced with Gujrathi's check-mating net with his queen, rook and knight.

"Obviously I did not find the right moves, but my time usage was absolutely horrible," said Nakamura. "It was a huge reason why I could not find decent ideas, especially around moves 24-25."

Giving up: Nakamura resigned on the 36th move faced with Gujrathi's check-mating net with his queen, rook and knight. FIDE

The results, ninth round:
Open: D. Gukesh 5.5 drew with R. Praggnanandhaa 5; Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 3.5 drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE) 5.5; Vidit Gujrathi 4.5 bt Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 4.5; Nijat Abasov (Aze) 3 drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA) 4.5.
Women: R. Vaishali 2.5 lost to Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 6; Lei Tingjie (Chn) 5.5 drew with Nurgyul Salimova (Bul) 4; Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 3.5 drew with Aleksandra Gorychkina (FIDE) 5.5; Koneru Humpy 4 drew with Kateryna Lagno (FIDE) 5.

Spin great Underwood passes away

CRICKET

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Derek Underwood, the most successful spin bowler in England's Test cricket history, has died at the age of 78, his former county Kent announced on Monday.

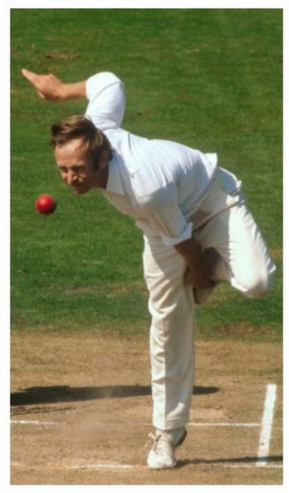
Underwood, nicknamed 'Deadly', took 297 wickets in 86 Tests with his distinctive brand of brisk left-arm spin and was noted for being particularly effective on uncovered pitches, which were in use for much of a 24-year First-Class career that ran from 1963 to 1987. He made his England debut as a 21-year-old in 1966 and played his last Test in 1982.

He famously bowled England to a Test victory over arch-rival Australia at The Oval in 1968 on such a surface, taking seven for 50 when a draw had seemed inevitable.

Together with wicket-keeper Alan Knott, he formed a celebrated combination for Kent and England. They might have achieved even more success for England had they not each been involved in Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket of the late 1970s and a rebel tour of South Africa in 1982.

Even so, Underwood's tally of Test wickets is 42 more than the next highest by another England spinner, Graeme Swann. After his playing career was over, Underwood served as president of MCC in 2009.

"Derek was an outstanding contributor to both Kent and England, winning trophies for club and country," said Kent chair Simon Phillip in a club statement.



Underwood is England's most successful spinner. FILE PHOTO

Underwood took 297 wickets in 86 Tests. He made his England debut as a 21-year-old in 1966 and played his last Test in 1982

Champions League, quarterfinal second-leg schedule
Barcelona vs PSG; Dortmund vs Atletico Madrid
(Both matches at 12.30 a.m. on Wednesday)

Solid Scheffler regains the green jacket in style

THE MASTERS

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

Top-ranked Scottie Scheffler dominated a back-nine shootout to capture his second Masters title on Sunday, taking a four-stroke victory at Augusta National.

Scheffler, who also took the green jacket in 2022, won a record $3.6 million top prize after a drama-filled battle with fellow Americans Collin Morikawa and Max Homa and Sweden's Ludvig Aberg, who made an impressive Major debut. "I can't put into words what it means to win this tournament again," Scheffler said. "I did my best to stay calm out there. I tried to stay patient on the course. Was able to make some key shots and key putts to keep my round going."

Scheffler birdied three of the last six holes to fire a four-under par 68 and finish 72 holes over the iconic 7,555-yard layout on 11-under 277 with Aberg shooting 69 to finish second on 281. Two-time Major winner Morikawa had a closing 74 to share third on 284 with Homa and England's Tommy Fleetwood.

Scheffler, who matched Tiger Woods as the only players to win the Masters twice while atop the world rankings, also became the fourth-youngest multiple Masters winner at age 27 behind Woods, Jack Nicklaus and the late Seve Ballesteros.

Woods shot 77 to finish 60th on 16-over 304 and said he plans to play the year's other three majors.

Scheffler, who hasn't played a round over par since last August, has the second-fewest Masters starts for any two-time winner with five. Only Horton Smith needed fewer, taking two of the first three Augusta titles in the 1930s.

Aberg pressured Scheffler down the stretch but could not catch him.

"Ludvig played great," Scheffler said. "He made a good move at me there on the back nine and I was fortunate to hold him off."

Second-ranked Rory McIlroy, who needs only a Masters victory to complete a career grand slam, fired a 73 to finish on 292.

Third-ranked Jon Rahm, the 2023 winner, fired a 76 to finish on 297.

The scores (top five, USA unless mentioned):
277: Scottie Scheffler 66-72-71-68; **281:** Ludvig Aberg (Swe) 73-69-70-69; **284:** Max Homa 67-71-73-73, Collin Morikawa 71-70-69-74, Tommy Fleetwood (Eng) 72-71-72-69.
286: Bryson DeChambeau 65-73-75-73, Cameron Smith (Aus) 71-72-72-71; **287:** Xander Schauffele 72-72-70-73.

The best: Scheffler justified his credentials as the world's best player with a superb show. GETTY IMAGES

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Muddappa rides to a double triumph

Hemanth Muddappa of Mantra Racing began the season with a win, claiming the grand double at the summer edition of the Valley Run 2024 that concluded at the Amby Valley in Maharashtra. Bengaluru's Muddappa was also adjudged the fastest rider of the day. Muddappa, the 12-time National champion from Bengaluru, won the Unrestricted class with a 1000cc stock bike, the BMW S1000RRR, and managed to set a National record of 9.480s. As a result, he pushed Mohammed Riyaz from Hyderabad into second spot.

Provisional results:
Unrestricted Open 550cc and above: 1. Hemanth Muddappa (Mantra Racing, Bengaluru) 9.480s, 2. Mohammed Riyaz (Hyderabad) 9.521, 3. Riddhish Patil (Mumbai) 9.735; **4-stroke 851 to 1050cc Open:** 1. Hemanth Muddappa 9.692, 2. Riddhish Patil 9.824, 3. Stephen Pachigala (Hyderabad) 9.831; **4-stroke 551 to 850cc Open:** 1. Mohammed Riyaz 10.421, 2. Hemanth Muddappa 10.524, 3. Siddharth Parmar (Mumbai) 10.649.

Speed merchant: Muddappa had a great outing in the Valley Run 2024. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Falcon beats Raja

Falcon HC overcame Raja HC 7-4 in a high-scoring thriller in the KSHA Super Division hockey league match here on Monday.

The results: Rainbow 3 (Yaseen 14, 45, Suresh Balbir 29) bt Raichur District HA 2 (G. Ankit 39, N.K. Vinayak 59); Falcon 7 (M. Sundhar Raj 11, John Bosco 28, Royan Roadrigues 33, 46, 55, Kavan Rai 34, C. Sridhar 58) bt V. Raja 4 (C. Sethu 14, C. Dinesh Kumar 19, 27, C. Raja 48).

Karthi nets four as Bangalore Phantom FC wins big

Karthi scored four as part of 10-goal thrashing for Bangalore Phantom FC over Vinayaka FC in a BDFA C-division league football match on Monday.
The results: JP Sports FC 5 (Bharath 4, Like 7, Prem 10, Viji 39, Vikram 45) bt BHEL(EDN) FC 1 (Naveena 40); Revive FC 3 (Jeddi Jonah Samuel 15, Vinaya Kumar 25, Vinayaka Komatla 54) bt Bangalore Mars FC 0.
Bangalore Phantom FC 10 (Karthi 4, 21, 31, 40, Gaagte 10, Md. Rizoi 13, 38, Shagil 36, 56, Gibraiel 46) bt Vinayaka FC 0.

Young Dream Soccer runs riot

Young Dream Soccer thrashed DB United 5-0 in a KSFA C-division league football match on Monday.
The results:
Technico FF 3 (Ronn Jarius 18, Md. Azeen 30+1, Vishal Saikia 44) bt RV FC 0; Mysore Vijayanagar FA 1 (Shaun 30) drew with United Aces 1 (Thokcham 39); Young Dream Soccer 5 (Ismail 4, 17, Satheesh 14, 28, 39) bt DB United 0.

Raj Rishi shines for Appaiah BC

Raj Rishi scored 27 points as Appaiah BC defeated Bharath SU 75-65 in the State U-18 basketball championship here on Monday.
In another contest, Southern Blues pipped VNSC 47-45.

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

Sporting Club Bengaluru crowned I-League 2 champion

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Sporting Club Bengaluru was crowned I-League 2 champion following a 1-0 away win over Sudeva Delhi FC on Monday. The result also means Sporting will play the I-League next season, the second tier in Indian football below the Indian Super League. The last city-based club to feature in the I-League was Bengaluru FC in 2016-17.

Coached by the Bengaluru-based Chinta Chandrashekhar, Sporting is now on 27 points from 12 matches and has two more matches left. Dempo Sports Club, on 21 points from 12 matches, can catch Sporting at the top but the latter has a superior head-to-head record.

"The journey has been nothing short of a dream," said Kishore S. Reddy, co-owner and CEO of the club.

"We have put in the right processes and it has been a total team effort.

Double delight: The Sporting Club Bengaluru side that won I-League 2 and earned promotion to I-League. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

> The journey has been nothing short of a dream
> – **KISHORE S. REDDY,** co-owner and CEO

"A lot of credit goes to everyone – from the investors to the coach to the kitman. We believed in local talent. We have the highest number of local players playing in the team.

"The club is a representation of the surroundings and we are proud of that," added Kishore.

Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu hoopsters rule the roost

Sports Bureau

Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu clinched the boys' and girls' titles respectively in the National youth basketball championships in Puducherry on Monday. Rajasthan dethroned Punjab 85-77, while Tamil Nadu beat Karnataka 65-60.

Haryana boys claimed the bronze, while Kerala girls finished third.